

Ashland Downtown Plan



PHASE II

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City of Ashland, Oregon

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Ashland Phase II Downtown Plan

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Section 1: Summary

Background

Section 2

This report is an update to the 1988 Ashland Downtown Plan. The goals of this update were to provide guidance on ways to improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, manage parking supplies, improve the streetscape, and promote appropriate infill development.

The study area for this update consists of the downtown area defined by the East Main Street and Lithia Way couplet. The historic downtown is included in this area, as well as more recently developed commercial uses along Lithia Way. The study area includes a mix of retail, public buildings, lodging, and open spaces.

Both vehicle and pedestrian use of the downtown area is high, especially during peak tourist seasons. Streets are used by delivery trucks, particularly the third lane on East Main Street. The couplet creates challenging intersections at both ends. Conditions are particularly difficult at Siskiyou Boulevard, where numerous turning movements, combined with important public buildings such as the library and fire station, make both motor vehicle and pedestrian movement complicated and uncomfortable.

Sidewalks throughout the study area are continuous, although in places on East Main they are crowded by planters, and are generally too narrow on Lithia Way. Crossings pose the greatest problem for pedestrians throughout the downtown area. On East Main Street, crosswalks are not always well-marked, crossings distances are long, and occasionally, the distance between crosswalks is too long. On Lithia, pedestrian problems are created by skewed intersections resulting in long crossing distances and poor access for disabled persons.

There are no bike lanes within the downtown.

This plan update incorporated a number of planning documents completed since the 1988 Downtown Plan was adopted. The City has done a great deal of work to address land use, design, parking, and transportation issues.

In addition to reviewing existing documents, this study included field observations, meetings with stakeholders, a multi-day charrette, and several public presentations.

Streets Plan

Section 3

The Streets Plan element of this document focussed on intersections through the downtown study area along Lithia Way and East Main Street. A number of maintenance issues were identified that affect the transportation function of the downtown area. The most critical maintenance issue identified is the severe crowning on East Main Street, which will need to be reconstructed before many of the recommended pedestrian improvements can be implemented.

Each intersection was mapped for existing conditions, then analyzed for improvements. For the most part, the recommended improvements involved immediate restriping of crosswalks from parallel bars to zebra style. Also, Lithia Way could be immediately restriped

with bike lanes. Other, longer-term recommendations include removal of the third lane along Main Street and restriping the street to include a bike lane and diagonal parking. On most intersections, curb extensions are recommended to better align crossing points and reduce crossing distances.

Parking Plan

Section 4

A downtown parking management strategy and plan was developed through a review of background materials and discussions with stakeholders. Key issues included capacity, misuse by employees, the need for better or more off-street facilities, and inconsistent signing.

Recommendations for Ashland include near-term actions, such as enhancing existing parking inventory database to include turnover data. It is also recommended that enforcement activities be reviewed to assure that existing time zones are honored. The most essential recommendation was that Ashland revise its existing parking management nodes to three zones: Zone A (Core), B (Intermediate), and C (Periphery).

For the mid-term, the Parking Plan recommends implementing a series of parking management strategies, particularly in regard to Zone A (Core), which would change all on-street parking to be either 2-hour on-street or 4-hour off-street. For Zone B (Intermediate), the purpose would be to provide longer-term stay opportunities; for Zone C (Periphery) that would be unregulated.

The Parking Plan suggests that as 85% capacity is reached, Ashland may consider pricing parking to facilitate more efficient turnover, encourage use of specific facilities in specific management zones (i.e., short-term vs. employee parking), encourage use of alternative modes, and provide funding source for new supply and alternative mode options

“Wayfinding” is the creation of a uniform system of directional signage that can increase the use of public parking. The Parking Plan recommends that Ashland establish a consistent signage package that incorporates a uniform design, logo, and color package into all information signage related to parking.

Land Use and Streetscape Plan

Section 5

The downtown area of Ashland is zoned C-1 Retail Commercial District, with a partial “Downtown” or “D” District overlay. The Plan recommends expanding the “D” district to include the northern side of Lithia Way to encourage infill with denser development by reducing the need for developing large off-street parking areas and allowing taller buildings.

The streetscape discussion of the downtown Ashland streetscape is broken into the following components: East Main Street, Lithia Way, streets perpendicular to East Main and Lithia, alleys, street-oriented urban open spaces, downtown gateways, public restrooms, and infill buildings.

Recommendations for East Main Street include reconfiguring the existing planters to extend into new curb extensions to add width to the sidewalks and room to add benches, newspaper boxes, drinking fountains, as well as elements such as native boulders and public art.

On Lithia Way, the acute-angled intersections represent an opportunity to create sitting areas by slightly extending the public right-of way. Furnished with benches and trash receptacles, these areas could provide attractive sitting areas.

For the cross streets downtown, improving the pedestrian environments will increase the connection between parking lots on or around Lithia Way and East Main St.

The downtown gateways at either end of the couplet could be enhanced by incorporating such elements as planters and local granite rocks, large signs or large public art.

Infill buildings should be at least two stories, and higher in some cases, with difference in grade between East Main and Lithia Way used to advantage. Street level floors of infill buildings should be commercial, with upper floors being either commercial, office, or residential. Some new multi-story buildings could incorporate parking within, behind, or even on top of the building.

Next Steps

Section 7

This Phase II plan includes recommendations for many improvements to downtown. The City will refine and prioritize these recommendation through the continued involvement of the public. Evaluation criteria are suggested. One way to assign priorities to the proposed projects would be to divide them by their cost, ease of implementation, and logical sequence.

Section 2: Background

2.1 Goals

This plan updates the 1988 Ashland Downtown Plan and implements components of the Ashland Transportation System Plan (TSP) for reducing exclusive vehicular orientation and creating greater accommodation for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit in the downtown. It identifies conflict points between motorists and pedestrians and offers alternative solutions.

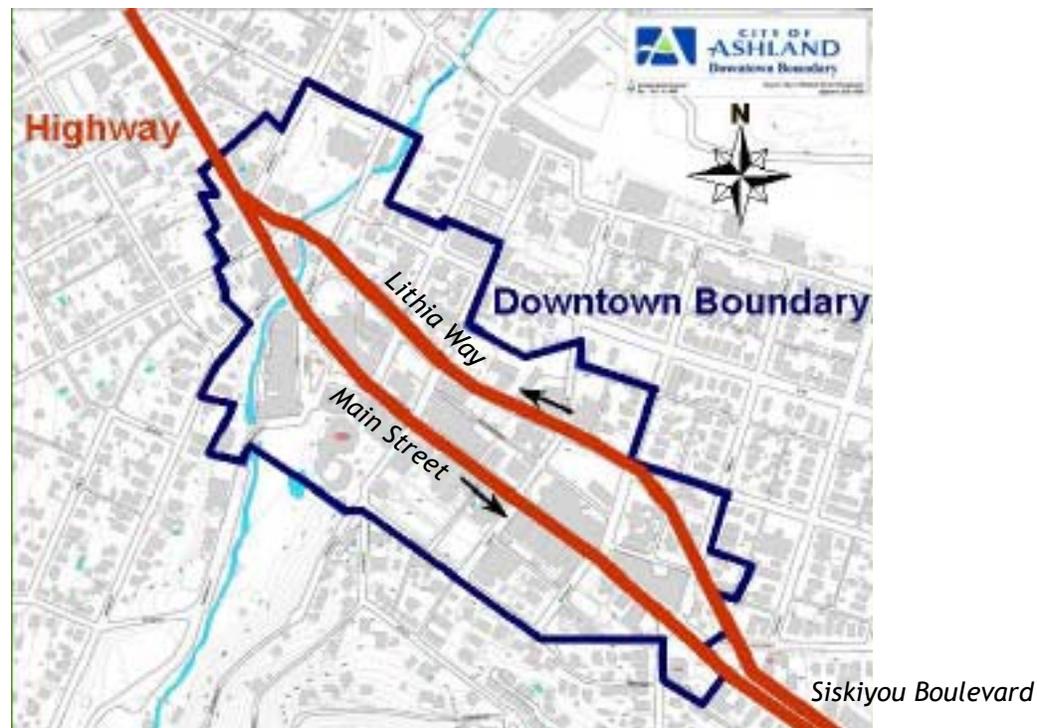
Specifically, the plan is intended to enhance the pedestrian and bicycling environment in the downtown and improve links between downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. It accomplishes this by:

- Improving pedestrian crossings.
- Improving the streetscape.
- Promoting mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented infill and redevelopment along Lithia Way.
- Managing parking supply.

2.2 Description of Downtown

2.2.1 Study Area

The study area encompasses downtown Ashland as shown in Figure 2-1. The intersection at Siskiyou Boulevard at the south end of downtown was added to the study at the request of the City.



*Figure 2-1.
Study Area*

2.2.2 Land Uses

The existing downtown is a mix of traditional storefronts, restaurants, public open spaces and buildings, offices, lodging, and theater. The downtown is around a half mile long, and its ends are defined by the Lithia Way/Main Street couplet. The downtown is a tourist destination for many, but also serves the Ashland community. The nature of the downtown land use mix has not substantially changed since the 1988 Downtown Plan was written, although a number of structures and open spaces have been considerably improved.

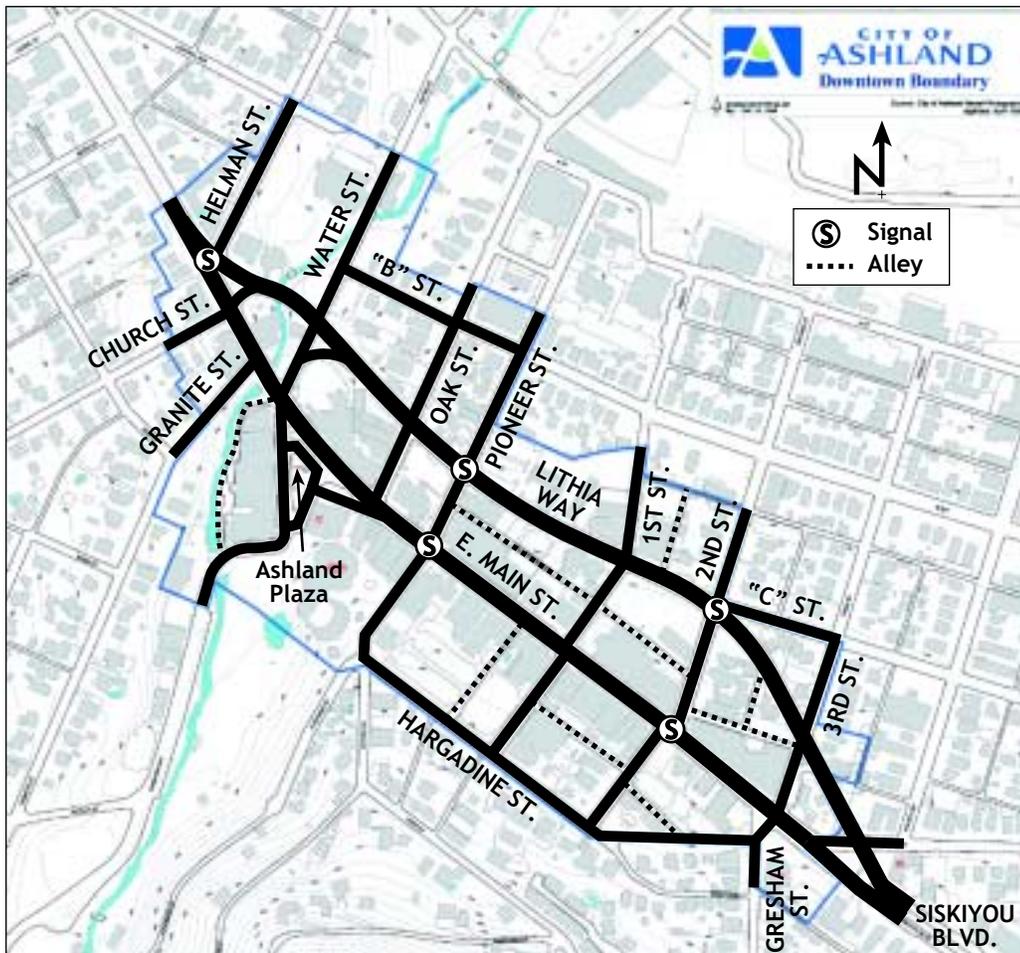
2.2.3 Street System

◇ Highway

The Rogue Valley Highway, OR-99, is the major street. It is classified as a District Highway, the second lowest category of state highway, and is not part of the freight system which is on nearby Interstate 5.

Within the downtown the highway forms a couplet (two one-way streets). The southbound leg is East Main Street and the northbound leg is Lithia Way. There are 17 street intersections in the study area plus numerous alleys and driveways. The analysis follows the two legs of the highway couplet from south to north.

Figure 2-2. Downtown Street System



The two ends of the couplet are the gateways to downtown. The south end where Siskiyou Boulevard begins includes two public buildings: the library and fire station. The north end at Helman Street is mixed commercial and residential. The distance between gateways is roughly 2800 feet (Lithia Way runs for about 50 feet longer because the street curves).

Inbetween the gateways are 7 cross-streets plus one additional T-intersection (Granite Street) on Main Street. There are traffic signals at Helman Street, Pioneer Street, and 2nd Street (see Figure 2-2).

◇ **Connecting Streets**

A downtown couplet works best with many cross-streets so that traffic can circulate. There are 6 connecting streets between Lithia Way and Main Street plus turnarounds at the couplet gateways. Most of these short blocks (2nd Street is the longest at 380 feet) have relatively narrow sidewalks and on-street parking. A few of the streets are one-way on certain blocks.

There are also several alleys between the couplet legs that provide rear access to some of the buildings and parking lots. They are generally too constrained for semi-trucks but are used by smaller delivery vehicles.

Several local streets run parallel to the highway. Hargadine Street to the west and “B” Street to the east are important alternate routes for local traffic and additional on-street parking.



Top: Delivery truck using alley.

Bottom: Sidewalk on Hargadine Street.

2.2.4 Pedestrian Activity

Activity is spread out throughout the downtown but tends to be greatest along Main Street where the major pedestrian attractions are located. There appears to be more activity along the west side of Main Street and around Lithia Square. Lithia Way has relatively few pedestrians. Cross-streets, such as Pioneer and Oak, provide connections between parking near Lithia Way and pedestrian attractions. Some of the qualities that contribute to a good pedestrian environment are listed in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1. Pedestrian Qualities on Highway

Quality	Main Street	Lithia Way
Buildings fronting the street	Most	Few
Interconnected streets	Yes	Yes
Low traffic volumes	No	No
Low traffic speeds	Partial	Partial
Mixed land use	Yes	Partial
Multi-story buildings	Partial	Few
Public spaces	Yes	No
Narrow streets	No	No
On-street parking	Yes	Yes
Wide sidewalks	Partial	No
Small block size	Partial	Partial
Street trees	Some	Few

2.2.5 Vehicular Activity

Average daily traffic volumes on the highway near the study area as reported by ODOT for 2000 are:

Main St. (2-way) north of Helman St.	14,800
Southbound leg of couplet:	
Main St. south of Church St.	12,900
Main St. north of Pioneer St.	12,900
Main St. south of Pioneer St.	14,800
Main St. north of 2nd St.	13,200
Main St. south of 2nd St.	13,800
Northbound leg of couplet:	
Lithia Way south of 3rd St.	15,900
Lithia Way south of Pioneer St.	14,000
Lithia Way north of Oak St.	12,300
Siskiyou Blvd. (2-way)	21,900

The combined peak volume of nearly 30,000 vehicles per day (or about 3,000 vehicles per hour) occurs around 3rd Street. Daily and seasonal variations may cause the peak traffic to be about 30 percent higher than the yearly average (or 4,000 vehicles per hour) based on observations in other tourist-oriented communities. This is well within the capacity of a 2-lane couplet which can normally carry about 1,500 to 2,000 vehicles per hour per lane (or 6,000 to 8,000 vehicles per hour total), depending on many factors: signals, turning movements, parking vehicles, delivery trucks, buses, and crossing pedestrians (refer to Transportation Research Board's Highway Capacity Manual).

The streets connecting the two legs of the couplet carry moderate traffic (weekday vehicles per day for May 1998):

Oak Street	2600
Pioneer Street (signal)	3350
1st Street	950
2nd Street (signal)	2500
3rd Street (one-way)/Gresham Street	1950/2400 (Oct. 2000)

The unsignalized intersections have relatively high volumes. Given the traffic volumes on the highway, delays on the cross-streets are probably extreme during peak periods. Oak Street and 3rd Street/Gresham Street, in particular, would benefit from intersection improvements that shortened crossing distance or shifted turning movements to other intersections.

No bicycle counts are available for the study area. During site visits bicycles were seen parked along Main Street and its cross streets, at Ashland Plaza, and at the library. Bicycles were also seen on Main Street and Lithia Way--more than in most Oregon downtowns.

Some perspective is given by the 1990 Census journey-to-work data (2000 data are not available). About 2.7 percent of workers traveled by bicycle. This compares favorably to 9 other Oregon cities of its general size which had bicycle commuting rates from 0.2 percent to 1.2 percent. (The cities within 25 percent population of Ashland are Coos Bay, Forest Grove, Grants Pass, Klamath Falls, Milwaukie, Newberg, Roseburg, West Linn, and Woodburn.)

2.3 *Problem Identification*

2.3.1 *Literature Review*

One of the key elements of this Ashland Downtown Plan update was to recognize and build on the enormous amount of planning that has already occurred in Ashland. In all, more than a dozen documents were examined and the relevant components noted. The following summary briefly describes the key applicable elements of each document.

◇ **Ashland Central Area Plan (1967)**

This is one of the earlier plans for the central portion of Ashland. It discussed the relationship between aesthetics, parking, pedestrian access, and tourism to the economic health of the down-town area. Many of the issues recognized by the 1967 plan remain important today.

The plan described the Plaza as a central area for activity, and includes many concepts for improving the pedestrian atmosphere of downtown. The plan describes its vision for the future: “On Main Street, pedestrians will move within an attractive environment. Space once dominated by the automobile will be predominantly used for pedestrian purposes...” This remains an important goal for Ashland and was one of the main focuses of the current update.

Some elements of the plan, such as the use of decorative lighting and colored concrete have been realized. Some suggestions, such as the closing of Oak and First Streets to automobiles, have been set aside for concerns about overall accessibility and retention of on-street parking. Others, such as providing special paving to emphasize crosswalks, are still viable ideas but have yet to be implemented. Still other elements, such as shortening crossing distances for pedestrians, were partially implemented and need to be re-examined to increase their effectiveness.

◇ **Ashland Comprehensive Plan (circa 1989)**

The Ashland Comprehensive Plan recognizes the historical areas of Ashland as unique and critical resources. The downtown plan area is mostly encompassed by an area called the Commercial District, which includes the Lithia Springs Hotel, Ashland Public Library, and several other structures. The Comprehensive Plan also discusses the Downtown Overlay District, where off-street parking is not required. The Comprehensive Plan Map shows the downtown area as a distinct area created by the couplet.

◇ **Ashland Downtown Plan (1988)**

The 1988 Downtown Plan has been a pivotal document for Ashland, directing many of the changes over the last 13 years that have made the downtown one of Oregon’s most successful. In 1986, a group of citizens began working on an update of the 1967 plan. The update forwarded a number of goals to achieve the citizens vision for Ashland: a downtown that is economically healthy, attractive, an important cultural and arts center, accommodates walkers, bicyclists, and motor vehicles with equal ease, appeals to locals, and tolerates the varying lifestyles of both visitors and citizens.

While it was recognized in the 1988 Plan that Ashland had many successful elements, some weaknesses were identified: a seasonal economy, limited parking, traffic congestion, and a lack of pedestrian amenities such as appropriate landscaping, seating, gathering areas, and street life.

The 1988 Plan was intended to be action-oriented, with a number of short-term goals. Some of these have been achieved, and others remain to be implemented.

A number of new or expanded parking areas were identified. These were planned to be centrally located to encourage visitors to park once and view the whole downtown as a single destination. Some of these were developed, but other opportunities were not realized.

The Plan also proposed improvements to Guanajuato Way, Bluebird Park, Lithia Plaza, Black Swan Plaza, Lithia Way, and side streets (Oak, Pioneer, First, and Second). Most of the recommended changes to the public spaces have been made. However, Lithia Way remains less pedestrian friendly than Main, and the side streets continue to need improvements for pedestrians.

Several management changes were also suggested. Most of these, such as clearing up street name confusion and encouraging street activity, have been implemented. Some changes, such as improving litter containment and combining newspaper vending boxes are ongoing issues in Ashland.

In the area of regulation, the 1988 Plan identified the desired direction of future infill projects. The City has since updated its site plan review and other land use regulations that support the appropriate types of development in downtown.

Parking management was suggested and has been implemented, although parking regulation continues to be a major concern in downtown.

Second story residential uses, identified in the 1988 Plan as desirable in the downtown area, is now encouraged through the zoning code.

The 1988 Plan also recommended that the City Hall should remain in downtown. City Hall has outgrown its present location; however, the expansion is occurring within a block of the existing location, which will remain a city office.

◇ Site Design and Use Standards (1992)

The Ashland Site Design Standards includes standards that apply specifically to the downtown area. These standards were used as a basis for the infill and streetscape recommendations for this downtown plan update.

◇ Transportation Element of the Ashland Comprehensive Plan (1996)

The Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan visualizes Ashland retaining its character as it grows. To this end, the Element addresses innovative ways to keep streets in scale with the community and as attractive as possible, and emphasizes the concept of “modal equity.” In downtown Ashland, the streets that make up the Lithia Way/North Main Street couplet are classified as boulevards. Boulevards are meant to carry large volumes of traffic, but also to provide important public spaces that actively encourage walking, bicycling, and

transit use. Boulevards are expected to provide protected pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, and easily accessible transit stops.

◇ **City of Ashland Transportation System Plan (1998)**

The Ashland Transportation System Plan (TSP) is for the entire urban area of Ashland. However, there are several items relevant to downtown. In Chapter 6: Identification of System Problems, the TSP identifies possible future congestion occurring on the Lithia Way/North Main Street couplet. It also identifies the intersection of Siskiyou Boulevard/North Main Street/Lithia Way/East Main Street as possibly needing signalization at some point in the future.

◇ **City of Ashland Buildable Lands Inventory (1999)**

The Buildable Lands Inventory concludes that Ashland does not need additional residential or commercial land within the 20-year planning horizon. However, the inventory does point out that a greater range of housing types, especially for affordable housing. Additional residential uses in the downtown core, as envisioned by this plan update, could increase the housing stock diversity by providing small apartments in a convenient location.

◇ **Lithia Way/Main Street/Siskiyou Boulevard Intersection Study Final Report (1999)**

This intersection study was a somewhat informal follow-up to the 1998 TSP for the complex intersection of Lithia Way, Main Street, and Siskiyou Boulevard. This intersection is confusing, allows higher traffic speeds than desirable, is very daunting for pedestrians, and supports a number of important land uses, particularly the fire station and historic library. The study examined several alternatives, including restriping, signalization, and creating a modern roundabout. Rough sketches of these alternatives were included.

◇ **City of Ashland Land Use Ordinance (1999)**

The Ashland Land Use Ordinance governs the downtown area as the C-1 Retail Commercial District. The district allows uses that are appropriate to the commercial core. The C-1 zone is further refined for the downtown area with a “D” Downtown Overlay District that does not require off-street parking to be provided, and allows structures higher than 40 feet with a conditional use permit.

The Downtown Overlay District encompasses most of the downtown study area, except for the north side of Lithia Way. One of the questions examined in this downtown plan update was whether the “D” Downtown Overlay District should be extended to include the north half-block of Lithia Way, in order to encourage infill and denser development.

◇ **Transit Options for a Livable Ashland (1999)**

This study examined the potential for expanding public transit in Ashland. It includes a “peer review” report that compares Ashland to several other cities with similar populations. The study provides a series of service scenarios for the future of public transit in Ashland. Of

specific relevance to downtown, the study looks at the potential to provide a shuttle service for downtown visitors and employees from outlying parking lots.

◇ Downtown Ashland Parking Survey (1999)

This survey was prepared by graduate students at the business school of Southern Oregon University for the Ashland Chamber of Commerce. The survey includes information about parking use and attitudes that were used as a background for the Parking Element of this downtown plan update.

◇ A Handbook for Planning and Designing Streets (1999)

This Handbook is a follow up to the Transportation Element of the Ashland Comprehensive Plan 1996 and the 1998 TSP. It establishes specific standards for each street type described in the Element and the TSP. For boulevard streets such as Lithia Way and North Main, the Handbook describes 11-foot travel lanes, 6-foot bike lanes, on-street parking, a park row of street trees, and 8-10-foot sidewalks.

◇ Library Circulation/Gresham Street Parking Analysis (2000)

This study was provided for a planned expansion of the Ashland Library. The intersection of Gresham Street and North Main Street is at the gateway to the city -- Gresham Street provides the only access to the library's public parking. In addition, many pedestrians cross North Main Street in front of the library. The report suggests that the city may eventually want to make Gresham Street a one-way collector in order to increase safety at the intersection. The one-way configuration would also allow an increase in on-street parking in the vicinity of the library.

◇ Ashland in Action (2000)

This report was compiled as a comprehensive transportation action plan. The report contains a series of recommendations for improving pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and parking. The report concluded that the most pressing improvements needed were better pedestrian crossings, bicycle access, increased transit service, and a strong parking management plan.

◇ Siskiyou Boulevard Design Concepts (2001)

The Siskiyou Boulevard plan provides a vision and specific recommendations for this gateway into downtown Ashland. The plan will significantly improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists along this important stretch of urban boulevard, which was recently returned to the City of Ashland by ODOT. Particularly, the plan adds bike lanes, thereby removing bicyclists from the sidewalk. It also improves intersection crossings for pedestrians and adds transit stops.

2.3.2 *Field Observations*

◇ **Lithia Way**

Lithia Way has two travel lanes with on-street parking on most blocks. The curb-to-curb width is generally 44 feet (two 13.5-foot lanes and two 8.5-foot parking lanes) south of Ashland Creek. There is no bike lane on Lithia Way and the 13.5-foot travel lanes adjacent to on-street parking are marginal for sharing with motor vehicles. The pavement is cracked and uneven.



Lithia Way:

- Wide enough for adding bike lane.
- Poor pavement condition.
- Skewed intersections with long crossings.
- Narrow sidewalks with obstacles and driveways.
- Low visibility crosswalks.
- Many curb ramps not accessible.
- Drainage grates at corners in crosswalks.
- No bike lane.
- Automobile oriented land uses.

Intersections are at an angle (skewed), sometimes extremely so. Several alleys enter near street intersections at sharp angles.

Sidewalks on Lithia Way are mostly against the curb (no planting strip) and 5.0 to 6.5 feet wide (not including the curb). Several places narrow to nearly 3 feet because of fixtures (mail boxes, bike racks, poles, etc.). Frequent driveways, some built like streets with curb returns, interrupt the sidewalk. Sidewalk surfaces are generally smooth. There are few trees or awnings sheltering the sidewalks.

There are 13 marked and 3 unmarked crosswalks of Lithia Way. The longest distances without a marked crosswalk are 770 feet between Oak Street and Helman Street, and 500 feet between 1st Street and Pioneer Street. Crosswalks exist on all intersection legs except for the south leg at Main Street (at the Fire Station), the west leg at 3rd Street, the one-way connection to Water Street, and the south leg at Helman Street. Several of the intersections have long, skewed crossings that are discussed in the Streets Plan section.

Curb ramps typically do not meet design guidelines and crossings are often obstructed by poles and drain grates. (Refer to standards implemented under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and recommendations published in January 2001 by the Public Rights-of-Way Access Advisory Committee at <www.access-board.gov/prowac/commrept/index.htm>.)

Adjacent land uses tend to be car-oriented. Parking lots, service stations, and drive-throughs generally detract from the pedestrian environment. There are many driveways on Lithia Way to access the numerous parking lots and automobile-oriented businesses. Some walking destinations exist such as the post office and a couple of restaurants.

◇ Main Street

Main Street, the southbound leg of the couplet, has 2 travel lanes as it enters the downtown. At Oak Street it changes to 3 travel lanes with parallel parking on both sides until 3rd Street. At 3rd Street, the street widens to 4 lanes for a short distance to the intersection of East Main Street/Siskiyou Boulevard/Lithia Way. Past this intersection Siskiyou is again 2-lanes.



Main Street:

- Street changes width every block.
- Poor pavement condition.
- Skewed intersections with long crossings.
- No bike lane.
- Low visibility crosswalks.
- Some trees and awnings.
- Lots of street furniture narrows sidewalks.
- Pedestrian oriented land uses.

The pavement width varies from about 40 feet at the north end (Granite Street), to 54 feet in the mid section (Oak Street to 1st Street), to about 48 feet at the south end (2nd Street to 3rd Street). It is over 60 feet wide as it nears Siskiyou Boulevard. The pavement is cracked, rutted, and extremely crowned (higher in the center).

The lane widths vary. In the midsection the street has two 8-foot parking stalls, two 12-foot lanes, and one 14-foot lane. Where it is narrowest the lanes become 10 to 11 feet wide.

Sidewalks on Main Street range from 4 to 12 feet (not including the curb). Planters and street furniture restrict the width to as little as 5.5 feet in places. Sidewalk surfaces are generally smooth. There are some medium-sized trees. Building awnings provide partial shelter. Most corners have curb ramps but many do not meet design guidelines.

There are 14 marked and 5 unmarked crosswalks of Main Street. The longest distances without a marked crosswalk are 460 feet between Pioneer Street and 1st Street, and 420 feet between Helman Street and Water Street. Crosswalks exist on all intersection legs except for the south leg at Helman Street, the north, east and south legs at Church Street, and the north and south legs at Granite Street. Several of the intersections have long, skewed crossings that are discussed in the Streets Plan section. Some curb ramps do not meet design guidelines.

There is no bike lane on Main Street and the right lane where cyclists would most often ride is only 11 to 12-foot wide adjacent to on-street parking.

There are few driveways on Main Street. Parking lots, such as those near Church Street, Water Street, 1st Street, and Gresham Street, access Main Street. Most of these accesses appear to be secondary and could be replaced by driveways on side streets.

◇ State Standards

As a state facility, the highway has certain mobility and access standards as detailed in the 1999 Oregon Highway Plan. For example, the mobility standard for motor vehicles is based on volume-to-capacity ratio (v/c). For OR-99 in Ashland the v/c standard is 0.85 (refer to Table 6 in the Oregon Highway Plan under “Non-MPO outside of STAs where non-freeway speed limit <45 mph”). If the downtown were to be designated as a Special transportation Area (STA) the v/c standard would be 0.95 (a higher number indicates less mobility). There is no mobility standard for pedestrians or bicyclists.

Special Transportation Area (STA): a highway land-use designation that balances highway performance and local access to community activities, business and residences. STAs focus on pedestrian accessibility and preserving the community functions of compact downtowns.

Some of the design options described below could affect mobility in small ways. If congestion becomes an important issue, a traffic study should be done for each intersection and for the downtown street network to estimate the existing v/c and the potential v/c with recommended changes.

Minimum driveway spacing for this type of highway is 350 feet (refer to Table 11 in the Oregon Highway Plan). Even in a Special Transportation Area, the minimum spacing is 175 feet. Many driveways on Lithia Way and Main Street are within 30 feet of intersections or within 50 feet of other driveways. Lithia Way, in particular, has numerous noncompliant driveways. These should be moved or eliminated as redevelopment opportunities occur; the benefits will include an uninterrupted sidewalk, fewer vehicle conflicts, and more on-street parking.

The design standards for highways are described in the draft Oregon Highway Design Manual. An important standard when considering design options is the width for travel lanes, bike lanes, parking stalls, and sidewalks. For a highway such as the Main Street/Lithia Way couplet, the widths are summarized in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2. Street Element Widths (ft) for State Highway

Element	Preferred ft	Minimum ft	Existing, ft	
			Main Street	Lithia Way
Sidewalk	12	10	4-12	5-6.5
Parking (Parallel)	8	7	8	8-9
Parking (Angle)	21	—	17*	—
Bike Lane	6	5	0	0
Travel Lane	12	11**	10-14	13.5-15

*As proposed.

**Assumes less than 250 4-axle trucks per day on each leg of the couplet which would need to be determined from traffic counts.

The existing highway does not meet minimum sidewalk width for about 80 percent of the length of Main Street and all of Lithia Way. There are no bike lanes. Travel lane width is substandard on Main Street between roughly 2nd and 3rd Streets (3-lane section).

2.3.3 Charrette Results

Between April 9–11 the public was invited to meet with the consultant team and city staff to discuss the downtown plan update. During this time there were two public meetings in the evening to present findings. The major comments are summarized in Appendix A.

Section 3: Streets Plan

3.1 *Maintenance*

Timely maintenance is probably the most important thing that can be done to improve the pedestrian experience. Every aspect of the downtown is touched by maintenance: pavement and striping, curbs, drainage, sidewalks, walls, windows, signs, landscaping, trash, and pet waste. Although any given problem may seem minor and isolated, they can add up to an uncomfortable and even unsafe downtown. People will walk and shop more in pleasant surroundings, and the disabled will have an easier time getting around.

The following maintenance deficiencies were noticed during the two site visits in March and April 2001:

- Broken, ridged, and severely crowned pavement.
- Faded striping (lane lines, crosswalks, and parking spaces) at many locations.
- Uneven and dirty sidewalks and curb ramps.
- Inconsistent sidewalk quality in adjacent neighborhoods.
- Debris at curbs and drainage grates.
- Broken planters.
- Damaged bike racks.
- Vegetation encroaching on the sidewalk and obscuring sight lines.
- Litter.
- Building surfaces in poor condition.

These issues should be worked out by the responsible people. This may involve a combination of private, city, and state cooperation to make sure the pedestrian environment is not compromised. It does little good to pursue the improvement projects below without a commitment to maintenance.

The city should identify who is responsible for each maintenance activity and how it can be encouraged and funded. Attractive, durable, and relatively easy to maintain materials for new construction should be specified.



Although this crossing features recent curb ramps and fresh striping, a closer look reveals at least 6 tripping hazards and other maintenance issues such as poor drainage and overgrown vegetation.

Although the roadway should be higher in the center for drainage, many pavement overlays have resulted in a severe crown and uneven areas near the curb. The pavement is also heavily cracked and rutted. Sidewalks and planters also show signs of wear. Functional, safe, and attractive facilities require maintenance.



3.2 Highway

The highway, comprised of Lithia Street (northbound) and Main Street (southbound), is the primary corridor for north-south travel and the primary barrier to east-west travel.

Many improvements can be made to specific intersections, as described in the next section. Other improvements to address parking, speed, and sidewalk width require looking at the entire street.

3.2.1 Lithia Way

South of Water Street the roadway is about 44 feet wide which provides room for a bike lane by simple restriping of the parking and travel lanes to minimum standard widths.

North of Water Street the roadway narrows to 30 feet, but there is no on-street parking so a bike lane will fit with restriping.

To widen the substandard sidewalks (5 to 6.5 feet existing, 12 feet preferred) significantly, a parking lane would have to be removed. Alternately, sidewalks can be improved by constructing curb extensions at corners where the width is most needed. This would probably be adequate until the lots are converted to “main street” style uses. At present the pedestrian use is relatively low compared to Main Street.



3.2.2 Main Street

Main Street changes width almost every block and sometimes within blocks. It changes character most at Oak Street. The segment north of Oak Street includes the southbound gateway into downtown, the area near the creek, and the plaza. The segment south of Oak Street comprises 4 plus blocks of generally “main street” style development.

◊ North of Oak Street

Buildings are 60 feet apart, sidewalks are mostly 9 feet wide (4 feet along the Plaza and at Helman Street), and the roadway is 40 feet wide. There are 2 travel lanes with some on-street parallel parking, mostly on the east side (opposite the Plaza).



The entry from the north is the critical area to establish a strong pedestrian orientation. The positive elements are the signal at Helman Street, cross-streets, trees at the creek, on-street parking, banners, wider sidewalks, and buildings close to the street. The negative elements are the downgrade, the unattractive island, the lack of crosswalks between Helman Street and Water Street, and the 40-foot wide roadway.

The key elements to improving this segment are an attractive gateway, highly visible crosswalks at all intersections, curb extensions to create parking bays and effectively narrow the roadway, a bike lane where there is no parking along the Plaza, and a landmark building at Water Street where there is currently a parking lot.

The gateway, crosswalks and bike lane can be installed in the short-term and will not affect highway function other than to calm traffic. These improvements are discussed under intersections, below.

The curb extensions will probably have to wait until the roadway is reconstructed because of the poor pavement condition and drainage issues. The building is also a long-term opportunity which will depend on private initiative.

◇ South of Oak Street

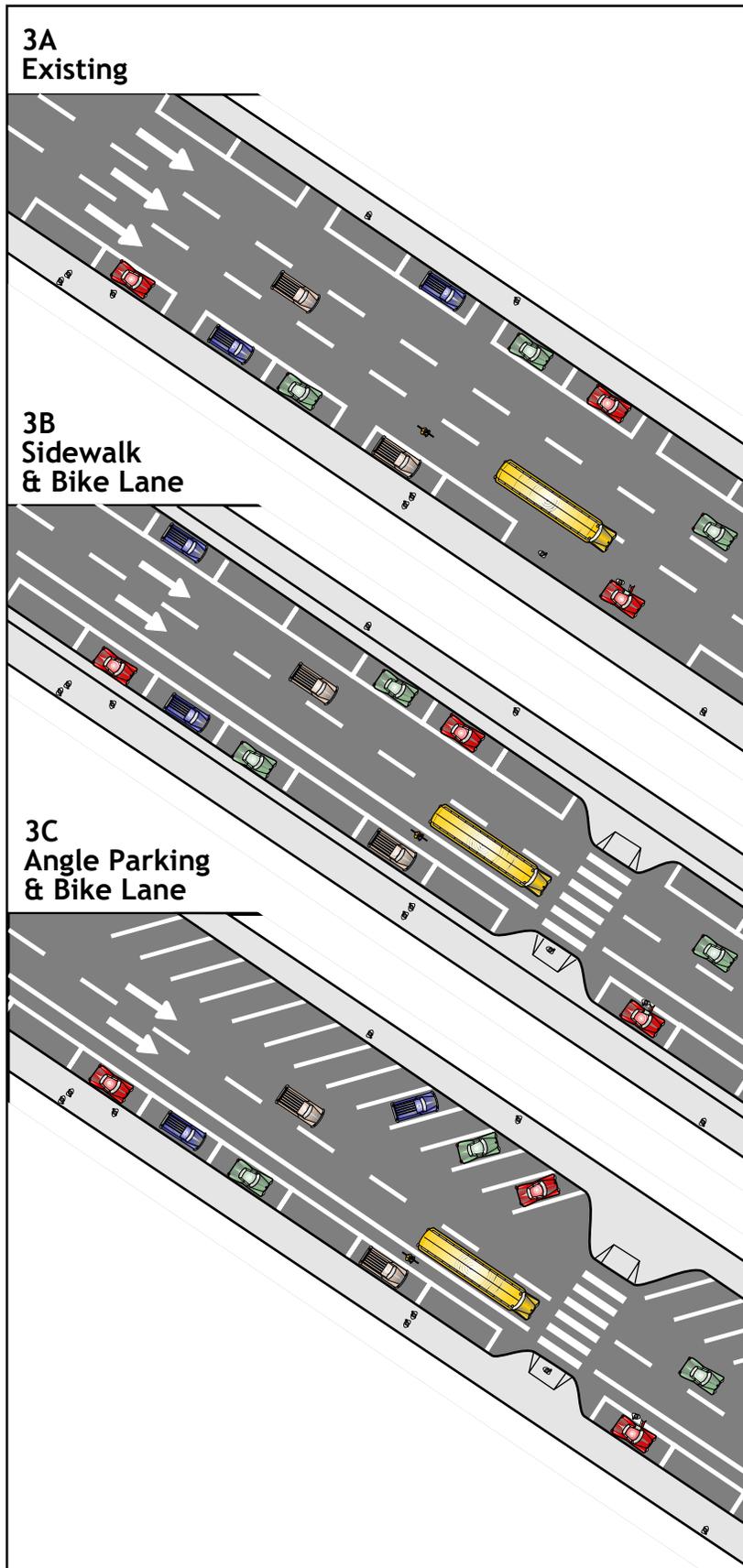
Main Street has 3 travel lanes with parallel parking on both sides between Oak Street and 3rd Street. The building-to-building width, sidewalk width, and curb-to-curb (roadway) width vary along these 4 blocks.

Buildings are 65 to 80 feet apart, with 70 feet being typical. Sidewalks are about 9-12 feet wide. To accommodate landscaping and furniture, the sidewalks narrow to as little as 5.5 feet in places. These areas become very congested during peak periods.

Roadway width varies from about 54 feet near Oak Street to about 48 feet at 2nd Street. Where it is widest the street has two 8-foot parking stalls, two 12-foot lanes, and one 14-foot lane. Where it is narrowest the lanes



Figure 3-1. Main Street Alternatives



become 10 to 11 feet wide which is standard with parking (ODOT prefers at least 21 feet of combined parking and lane width, such as a 13-foot lane and 8-foot parking stall). See Figure 3-1A.

Ideally, a 70-foot right-of-way in a downtown would have 12-foot sidewalks, 8-foot parking stalls, a 6-foot bike lane, and two 12-foot travel lanes. Any extra width would be used for additional sidewalk and landscaping space (Figure 3-1B). To achieve this on the existing street would mean major reconstruction.

A less disruptive approach would be to eliminate the third travel lane and use the added width for angle parking on one side and a bike lane (outside of the existing parallel parking) on the other side (Figure 3-1C). The existing roadway width would allow this arrangement from a point north of Pioneer Street to a point north of 2nd Street, a total of about 2 blocks. Elsewhere the parking would be parallel on both sides with two standard-width travel lanes and a bike lane. This is the proposed configuration shown in the street sketches in the next section.

Although the angle parking is feasible using standard industry dimensions (refer to Appendix B), it is inconsistent with ODOT policy which limits angle parking to specific conditions, including in part:

- Only in a designated Special Transportation Area. (Ashland is not an STA.)
- Average daily traffic less than 6,000 vehicles. (Main Street is over twice that volume.)
- 33 feet of combined width for the parking stalls and travel lane. (29 feet would be the typical dimension on Main Street with 45-degree stalls.)

To install angle parking would require that the street be removed from the state highway system by the city taking responsibility for it (refer to Section 3.2.3 for a discussion of highway ownership alternatives).

An alternative to angle parking is to use the width gained by removing the third travel lane for a bike lane and wider sidewalks. For example, the west sidewalk could be extended 6 feet to provide additional public space, outdoor dining and retail, larger trees, and a bus stop. This would also meet minimum lane width next to parking on the east side which is not currently the case.

How would removing the third lane affect traffic? Based on observations during 3 site visits, the third lane is mainly used for vehicles waiting at signals, for turning movements onto side streets, and for truck parking during deliveries. It does not appear to be needed for highway capacity which is served adequately by 2 lanes on Lithia Way with similar volumes.

The need for vehicle storage at signals can be lessened by converting to 2 lanes in combination with larger curb extensions to shorten the crossing distance of Main Street. This would allow shorter signal phases for the side street and pedestrian crossing, and less delay for traffic on Main Street.

For example, the signal at Pioneer Street is set for 90 seconds on Main Street and 25 seconds on 2nd Street. The crosswalk is about 46 feet long, giving pedestrians about 1.8 feet/sec to cross. With only 2 lanes and a bike lane, the crossing could be shortened to 32 feet, so that the 2nd Street phase could be shortened to as little as 18 seconds.

The shorter crosswalks on all legs of the intersection would also help vehicle turning movements because pedestrians would clear the intersection more quickly.

The need for convenient delivery areas could be handled by either dedicated loading zones (sacrificing a few parking stalls) or by combination zones that are for deliveries during certain times and switch to car parking at other times. Refer to Section 4, *Parking Plan*.

3.2.3 Future of the Couplet: State Highway or City Boulevard?

Until recently, Oregon Highway 99 ran continuously through the middle of Ashland as Siskiyou Boulevard, the East Main Street/Lithia Way couplet, and North Main. The 1.2-mile segment of Highway 99 known as Siskiyou Boulevard was recently the subject of an Intergovernmental Agreement between the City and ODOT that resulted in the transfer of that street section to the City of Ashland. Funding has been secured and plans are under way to improve Siskiyou Boulevard.

The East Main Street/Lithia Way couplet and North Main remain under ODOT's jurisdiction as district level Highway 99. The City has identified a number of improvements for the couplet. A number of these improvements would probably not be acceptable to ODOT on a State facility, such as mid-block crossings and additional on-street parking, without some kind of agreement. There are basically two ways to achieve agreement from ODOT to diverge from its normal highway standards:

- 1) implement a Special Transportation Area (STA) designation, and
- 2) assume ownership of the roads from ODOT.

◇ Special Transportation Area

One method for achieving greater flexibility on an ODOT highway that is within a downtown area is to request a Special Transportation Area (STA) designation. An STA designation may be applied to a highway segment where a downtown straddles the state highway. The point of an STA is to manage this highway segment as a main street rather than an urban highway.

An STA allows ODOT to reduce highway mobility standards in order to keep positive downtown characteristics. With an STA designation, ODOT recognizes the need to balance through traffic with local access, especially by pedestrians, by encouraging slower vehicle movement and improving pedestrian crossings. For example, adding pedestrian facilities such as curb extensions or mid-block crossings can be easier to get through ODOT's design review process when they are part of an STA. However, even the STA designation would probably not allow such changes as diagonal parking, since ODOT's policy for allowing diagonal parking is based on lower traffic volumes and a wider roadway than exist in Ashland.

It should also be noted that, as part of the STA Agreement, ODOT will expect active access management on the highway outside of the STA. For the City of Ashland, this will mean that some commercial areas outside of the STA will not be allowed direct access onto the highway. Frontage roads or side road access would be needed. The spacing for any new side streets would be at least 770 feet.

In order to implement the STA, ODOT and the City must develop and agree to a management plan within an Intergovernmental Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding. The STA management plan may include less restrictive highway mobility standards and may use flexible streetscape designs to improve local access and community functions. The agreement will be in effect when the STA is adopted as part of a local transportation system plan and comprehensive plan and in the corresponding corridor plan where a corridor plan exists.

An advantage to Ashland of pursuing an STA and retaining ODOT ownership of the couplet is that ODOT would continue to be responsible for maintaining and modernizing the roads. As noted previously in this report, East Main Street in particular is in need of reconstruction because of poor roadway conditions and excessive crowning. However, these projects are not currently within the ODOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and may not be funded for some time.

◇ City Boulevard

Alternatively, the City may decide to take ownership of the couplet from ODOT, as it did with Siskiyou Boulevard. This would allow Ashland to apply its own boulevard design parameters on the couplet and provide the most flexibility for future changes.

In general, ODOT supports the concept of local jurisdictions assuming ownership of district level highways (ORS 366.290(3)). The transfer would require an Intergovernmental Agreement between ODOT and the City of Ashland. The agreement could potentially include an ODOT allocation of funding for modernization of East Main and Lithia; however, these projects are not within the ODOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and may not be funded for some time.

3.3 Intersections

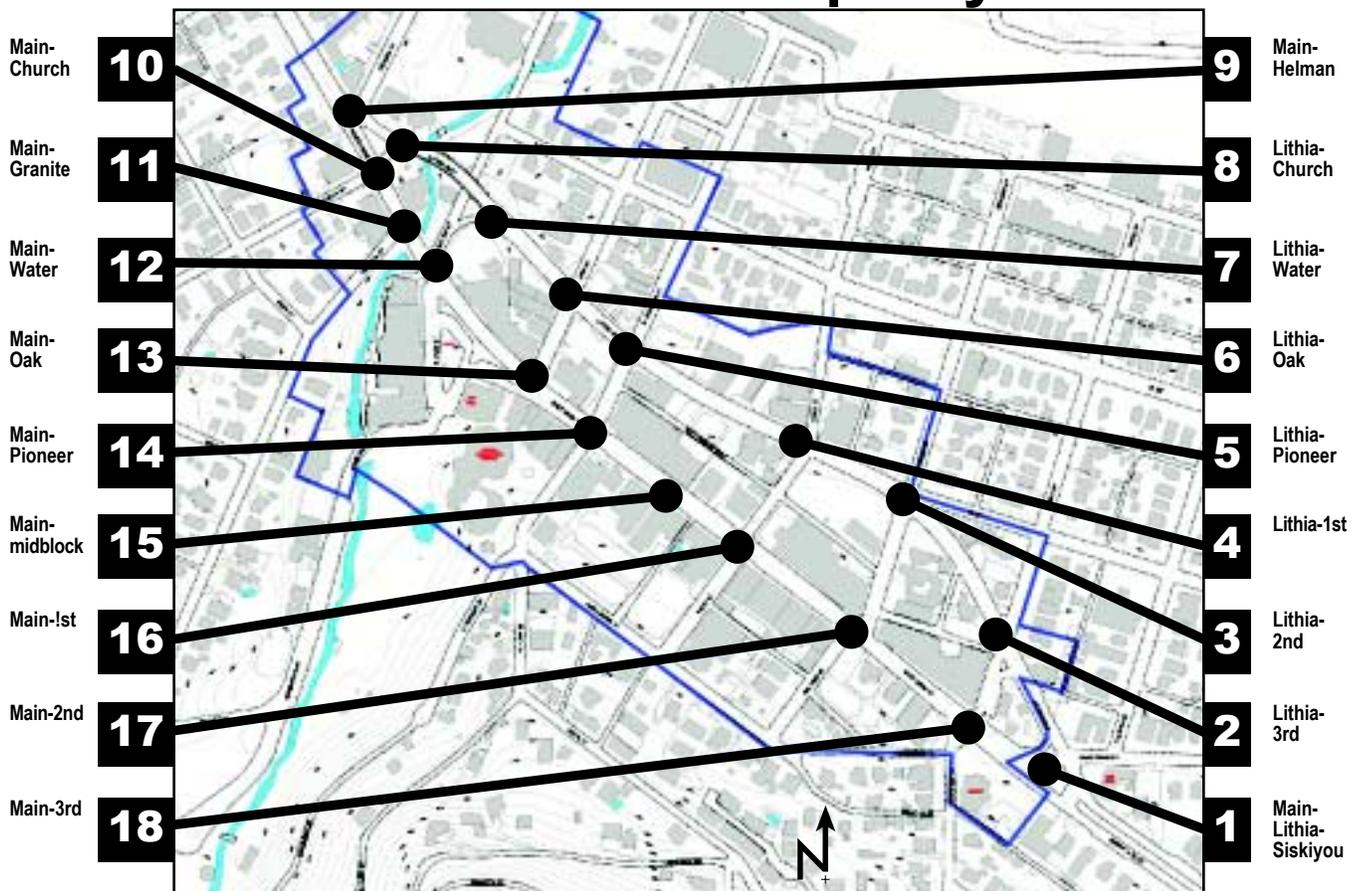
Each of the 17 intersections and one proposed mid-block crossing is discussed in terms of:

- Existing conditions (with photos).
- Deficiencies.
- Near-term and long-term improvements.
- Advantages and disadvantages of design alternatives (optional).
- Estimated cost.
- Plan view of existing design.
- Plan view of proposed long-term improvements.
- Cross-section of proposed long-term improvements (optional).
- Sketches or images of improvements (optional).

The intersections are keyed to the numbers in Figure 3-2. Most recommended improvements are aimed at improving overall street balance among pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and delivery trucks. This is accomplished primarily by reallocating street space through restriping and curb extensions, and by taking advantage of the features of a couplet (through traffic in one direction and limited turning movements) by squaring off corners. Refer to Appendix C for a discussion of how curb extensions work.

Figure 3-2.

Intersection Map Key



The width of right-of-way devoted to the sidewalk area is one indication of how much priority is given to pedestrians and transit. In most successful downtowns the sidewalk area takes up at least 25% to 45% of the right-of-way. Main streets work best when the sidewalk area including landscaping is at least 12 feet wide, preferably 15 feet in an active downtown such as Ashland.

At least 6 feet of the sidewalk area needs to be clear of obstructions to allow pairs of pedestrians to walk side by side, or to pass each other comfortably. The remaining width—the more the better—is used for street furniture (benches, cafe tables, lights, trees, drinking fountains, newspaper racks, trash receptacles, recycling bins, bike racks, and public art), places for people to stop, window shopping, outdoor retail, and signs.

On Main Street the width is divided roughly 75%-25%-0% between motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists; the sidewalk width ranges from 4 to 12 feet. It would be desirable to have a wider sidewalk on most blocks to handle the large numbers of pedestrians common in the peak tourist season.

On Lithia Way it is 80%-20%-0%; the sidewalk width ranges from 5 to 6.5 feet with a clear space of as little as 3 feet. Wider sidewalks on Lithia Way may be needed as the area develops into more of a pedestrian destination.

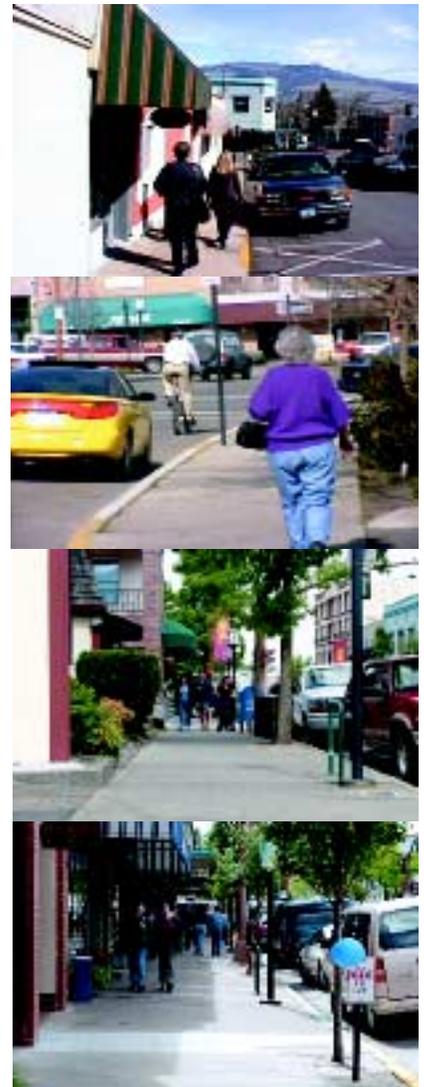
The sidewalk should be as wide as possible.

A 5-foot sidewalk (top) is cramped for people to walk side-by-side against a wall or parking.

A 6.5-foot sidewalk (second from top) is better but still uncomfortable against traffic.

A 9-foot sidewalk (third from top) provides room for some street furniture and for people to walk side-by-side.

A 12-foot sidewalk (bottom) allows couples to pass and room for benches or larger street furniture.



(1) E. Main St.-Lithia Way-Siskiyou Blvd.

Existing Design: At the south end of downtown the couplet begins where Siskiyou Blvd. ends. The northbound leg of the couplet (2 lanes) continues at about a 30 degree angle



The northbound approach into downtown on Siskiyou Boulevard provides few clues to slow down. Crossing the intersection on foot can take several stages.

on Lithia Way without a stop. East Main Street (3 lanes) enters the intersection as the southbound leg of the couplet, with two lanes continuing straight into Siskiyou Blvd. and one lane crossing at a stop sign. An additional lane allows vehicles to turn left onto Lithia Way at a stop sign.

Deficiencies: Although through traffic flows easily, vehicles tend to speed into downtown and cross traffic can have extreme delays. Pedestrian crossings are long, especially the 4 lanes in front of the library and bus stop. Crossings may involve up to three stages because of the two channelization islands. Pedestrians were observed waiting for long periods and then sprinting across.

The southbound departure from downtown approaching Siskiyou Boulevard widens to 4 lanes at the library. Crossing this wide intersection by any means can be difficult. A roundabout would reduce the crosswalk from over 60 feet to about 30 feet.



Proposed Improvements: This intersection could be improved by either a roundabout or a traffic signal.

Roundabout Advantages:

- + Would allow E. Main Street to be reduced to 2 lanes.
- + Short pedestrian crossings (2 lanes maximum).
- + Potential parking area next to library.
- + Strong gateway to downtown.
- + Slower through traffic.

Roundabout Disadvantages:

- Site slope complicates design.
- Peak through traffic requires 2 circulating lanes.
- Traffic distribution unbalanced (reduces efficiency).
- Complete reconstruction disruptive and expensive.
- May cut in slightly on two lots.
- Public acceptance unknown.

Signal Advantages:

- + Curb extensions and minor realignment shorten crossing distance (3 lanes maximum).
- + On-street parking added in front of library.
- + Public use to signals (5 already in downtown).

Signal Disadvantages:

- Delay to all users, especially through traffic.
- Signals unattractive and poles take up sidewalk space.
- Expensive installation and operation.

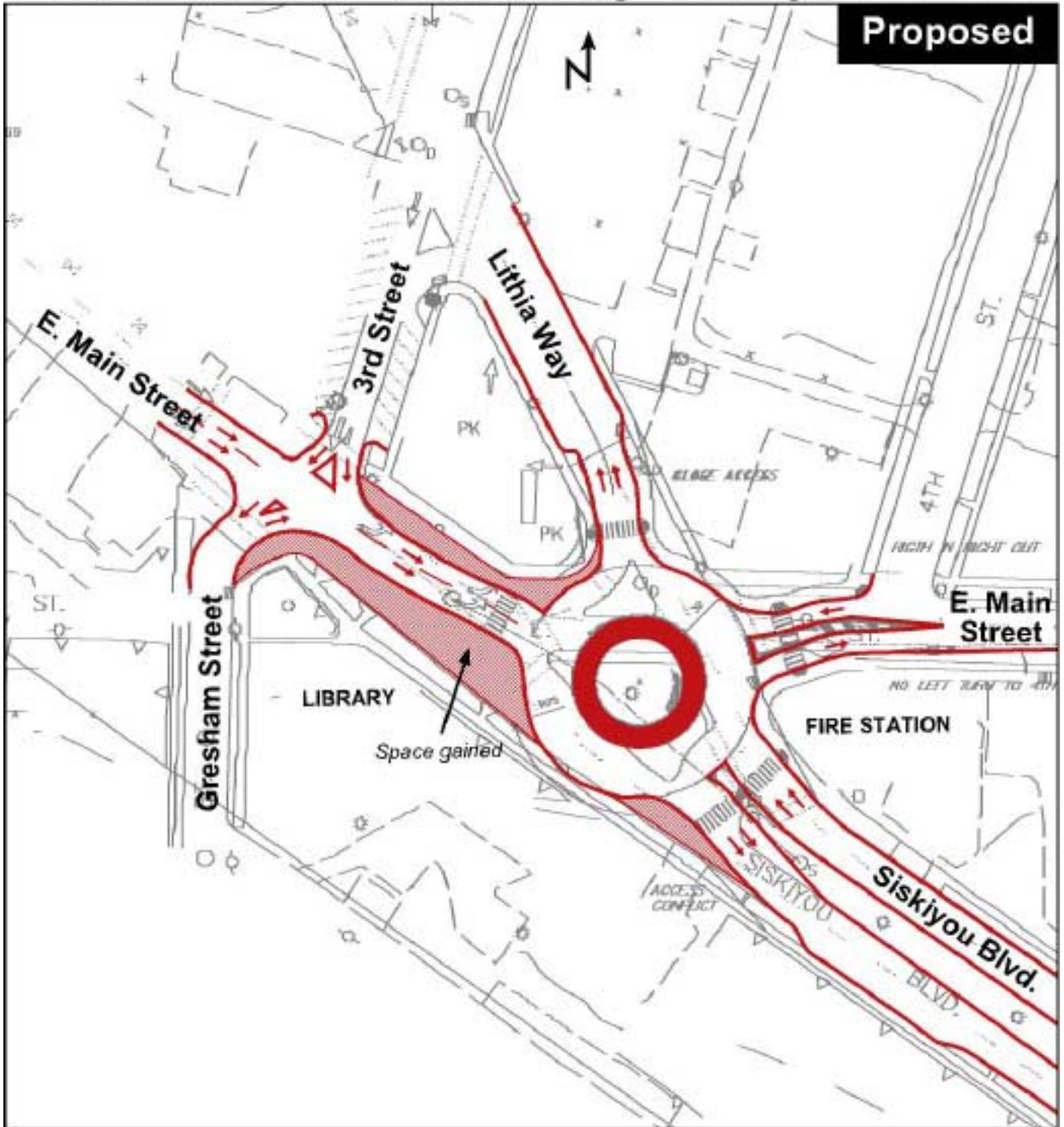
The roundabout is recommended as the best overall solution for all users, for its gain in public space, and because it can be developed as a fine gateway.

The south gateway does little to alert drivers to the pedestrian-oriented downtown.



East Main St.–Lithia Way–Siskiyou Blvd.

Proposed



(2) *Lithia Way-3rd St.*

Existing Design: Highly-skewed (40 degrees) intersection has three one-way legs and one two-way leg. An alley enters the northeast corner of the intersection, and the southeast corner has a channelized turn with an island.

Deficiencies:

- The west leg has an island without a marked crosswalk or pedestrian cut-through.
- The three marked crosswalks are long because of the skew and long curb returns; the crossing of the south leg is about 82 feet.
- Adjacent sidewalks are interrupted by alleys and driveways.
- Alley and driveway near northwest corner interfere with crosswalks.

Proposed Improvements:

- Mark crosswalk on west leg through island.
- Enlarge island to shorten pedestrian exposure and calm traffic.
- Construct curb extensions at southeast and northwest corners.
- Realign and shorten crosswalk on south leg.
- Close alley and shift access to realigned driveway.



The west leg of the intersection has a raised island in the path of pedestrians and no marked crosswalk. The island can be rebuilt larger (to shorten crossing distance) and with a cut-through for the crosswalk.

The crossing on the south leg of this unsignalized intersection is over 80 feet long. Motorists were observed to rarely stop for pedestrians. The child in this photo is “stealing home” between a gap in traffic. The crosswalk can be realigned with a new island and marked with high-visibility zebra stripes.

Also note the rough, broken, and rutted pavement. Construction of islands and curb extensions should be coordinated with repaving.

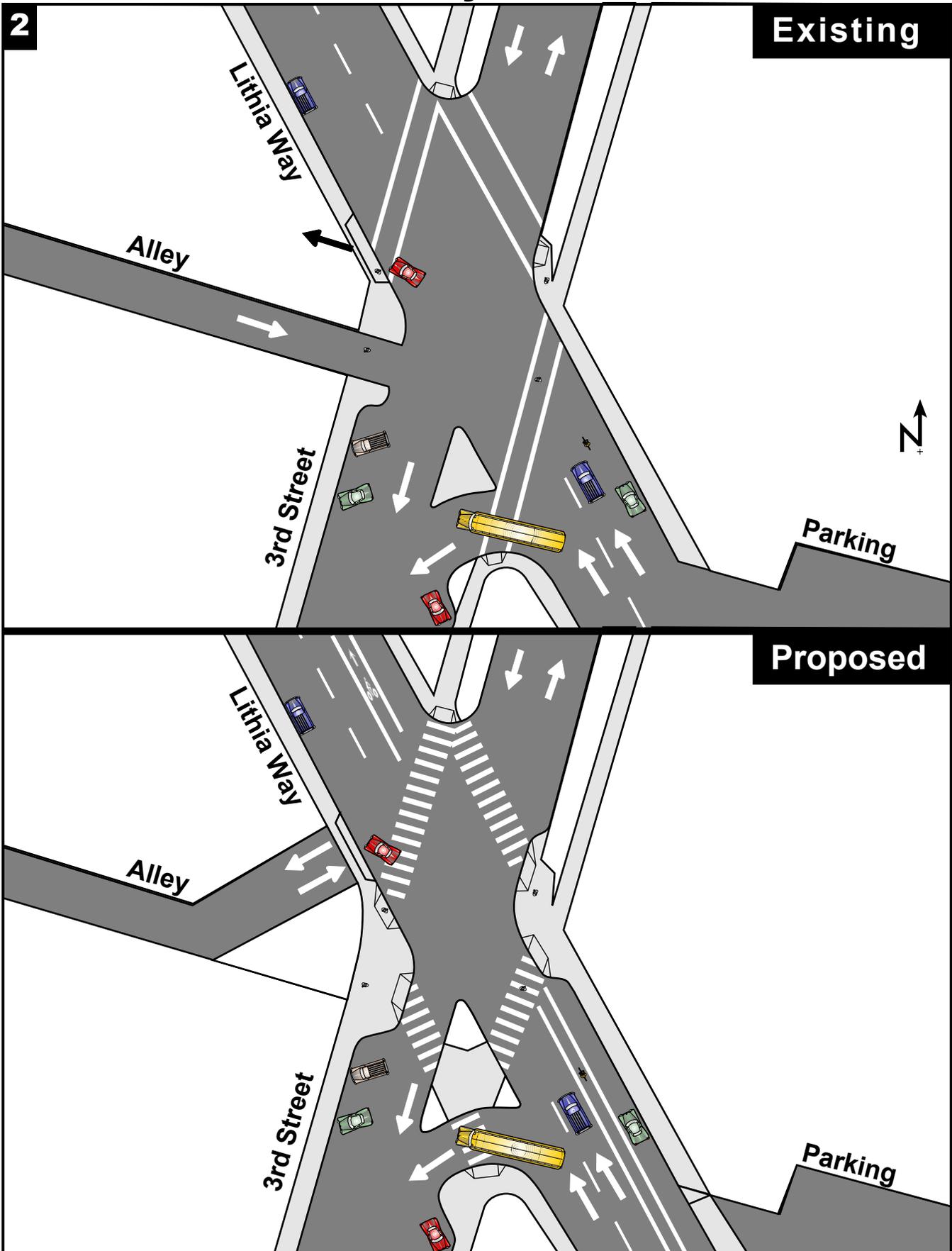


The sidewalk on 2nd Street leading to the northeast corner is narrow and obstructed by vegetation. It should be maintained.

The northwest corner has an alley that cuts over the sidewalk and into the street where it interferes with vehicles and pedestrians. It could potentially be moved to Lithia Way. To reach Main Street from the alley would then require going around the block.



Lithia Way at 3rd St.



2

Existing

Proposed

(3) *Lithia Way-2nd St.-"C" St.*

Existing Design: Five-leg, signalized intersection. Second Street (2 legs, 2-way) crosses at about a 60-degree angle while "C" Street (1 leg, 1-way) exits at a 30-degree angle.

Deficiencies:

- Long pedestrian crossing (about 80 feet) on south leg across Lithia Way and "C" Street.
- Sidewalk at Lithia and "C" Street falls short of crosswalk.
- Long right turns from Lithia Way to 2nd Street can endanger pedestrians.
- Signal pole and controller box obstruct narrow sidewalk.
- Shrubbery on southeast corner of 2nd Street and "C" Street can obscure pedestrians.

Proposed Improvements:

- Construct curb extensions at west corners to shorten crossing by 8 feet and add sidewalk space.
- Extend sidewalk at Lithia Way & "C" Street to crosswalk.



This signalized intersection is skewed and has 5 legs. Lithia Way and "C" Street meet slightly before the intersection with 2nd Street. The sidewalk ends here (photo below) with a gap to the crosswalk.

The nose could be extended to the crosswalk and "C" Street converted to one lane and angle parking.





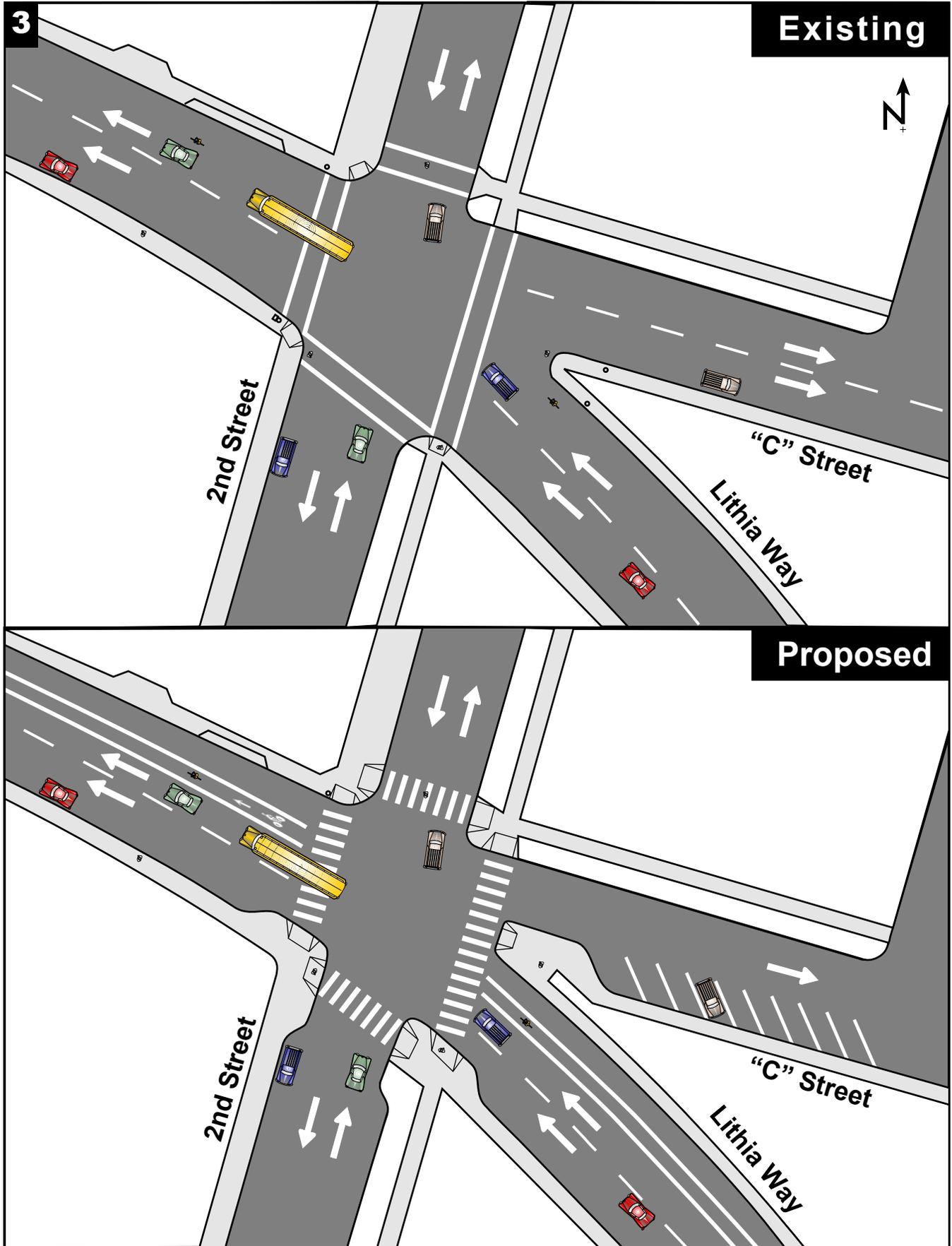
The southwest corner of Lithia Way & 2nd Street has narrow sidewalks and a single ramp that leads out-of-direction into a drain grate. A curb extension would provide proper design but would require re-engineering the drainage.

The signal pole, controller box and planter on the northwest corner intrude on the already tight pedestrian space. Neither the ramp nor the controller box meet disability design guidelines. A curb extension would provide room for proper design. Again, the drainage would need to be repositioned.



The southeast corner has an overgrown bush that can obscure pedestrians from right turning traffic. It should be trimmed or replaced with annual flowers.

Lithia Way at 2nd St.



(4) *Lithia Way-1st St.*

Existing Design: Four-leg, 2-way stop control on 1st Street. The west leg of 1st Street (2-way) enters at an 100-degree angle while the east leg (1-way) exits at a 110-degree angle.

Deficiencies:

- Narrow sidewalks prevent adequate curb ramps.
- Long crossing distances.
- Mail drop-off near crosswalk creates conflicts.
- Parking on 1st Street overlaps curb ramp.

Proposed Improvements:

- Construct curb extensions to add space for ramps and shorten crossings.
- Move drain grates out of crosswalks.
- Move mail drop-off to other side of intersection.
- Add bike lane.



The Post Office is at this intersection. Narrow sidewalks (left) and parking flush against the crosswalk (below) create poor pedestrian conditions. Curb extensions would help correct these problems. The drop boxes should also be moved after the intersection where cars will not interfere with the crosswalk.

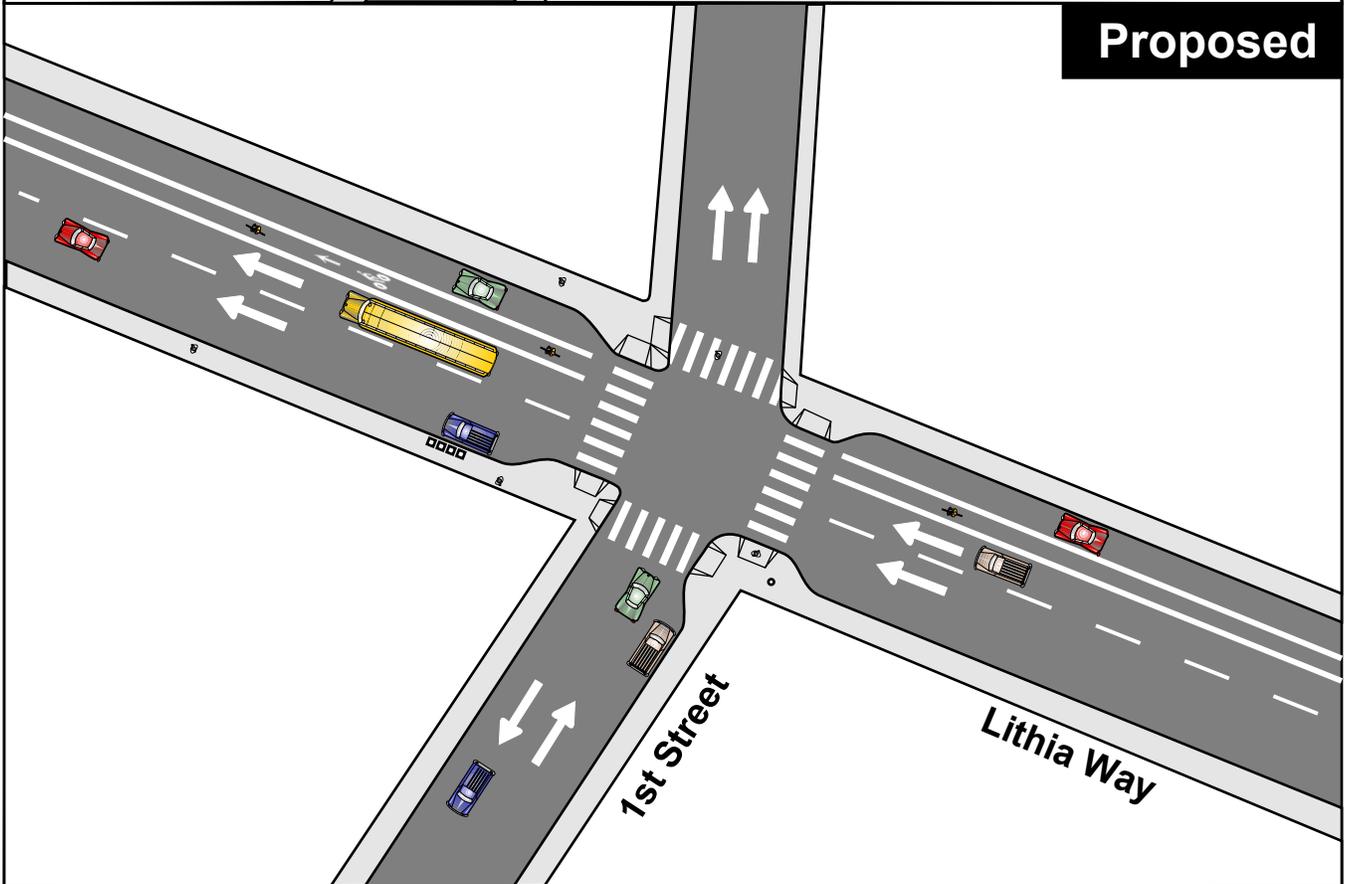
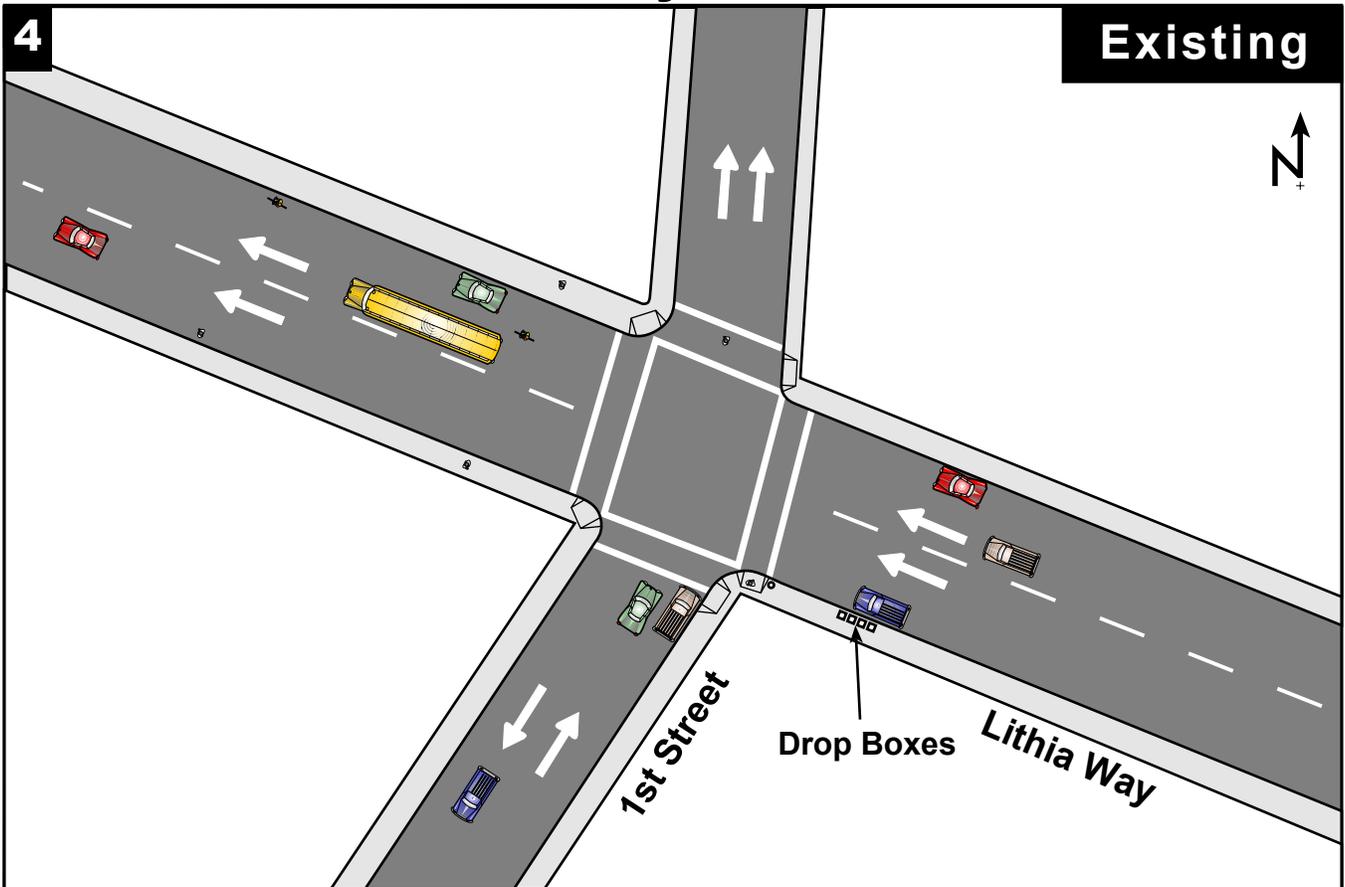


A curb extension would put this pedestrian farther out into the street before they stepped onto the pavement. A curb extension would require relocating the drain grate.



A new combined curb ramp installed during the study directs pedestrians into the drain grate. Water will also tend to wash up on the sidewalk.

Lithia Way at 1st St.



(5) *Lithia Way-Pioneer St.*

Existing Design: Four-leg, signalized intersection. Pioneer Street crosses at an 80-degree angle. The longest block on Lithia Way is the 540 feet between 1st Street and Pioneer Street (from intersection center to center). The shortest block is the 210 feet from Pioneer Street to Oak Street.

Deficiencies:

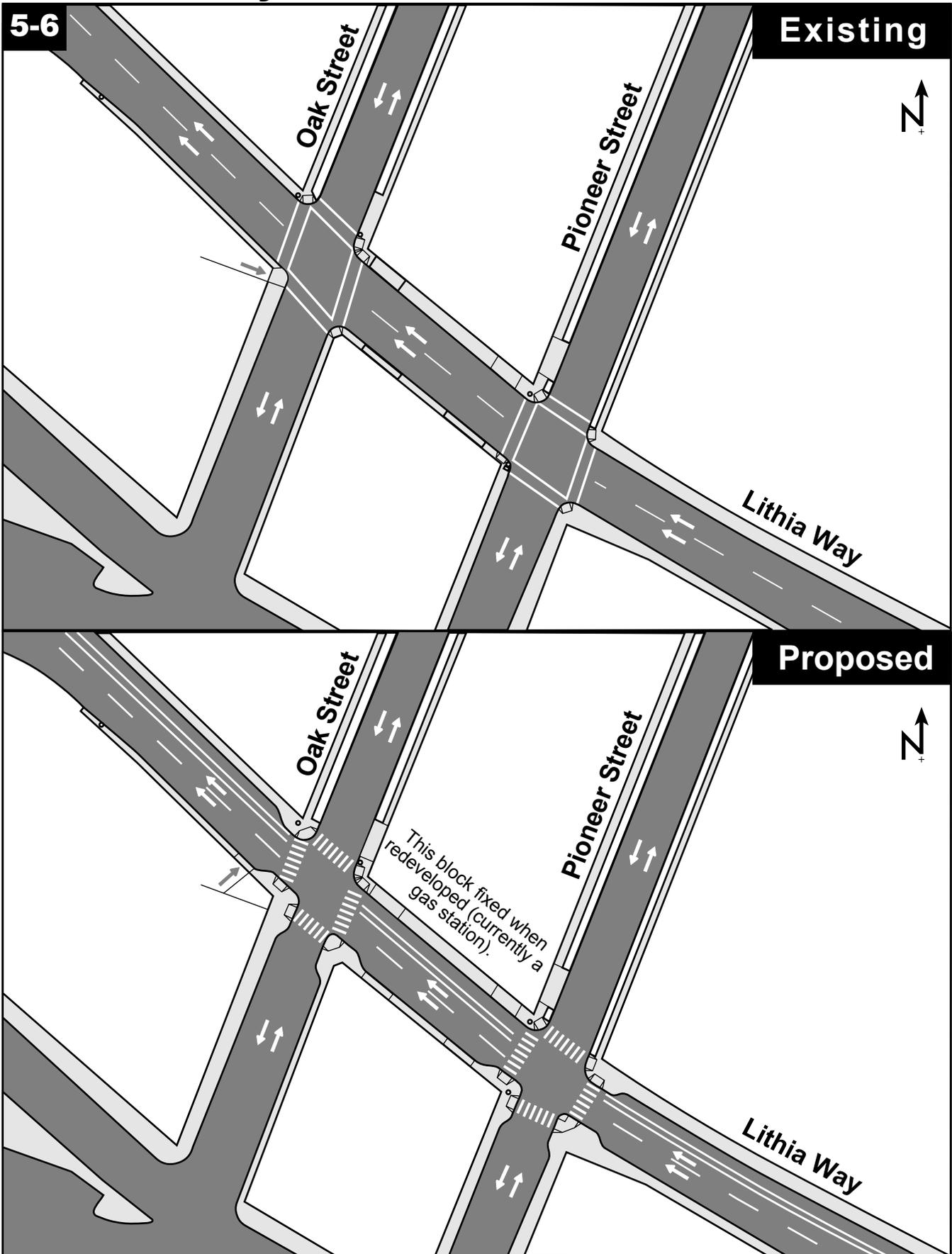
- Narrow sidewalks prevent adequate curb ramps.
- Signal pole and controller box obstruct sidewalk.
- Long crossing distances.
- Wide driveways.

Proposed Improvements:

- Construct curb extensions to add space for ramps and signal pole, and to shorten crossings.
- Put signal controls underground or install detectable barrier below pole-mounted control box.
- Shorten driveways.



Lithia Way at Oak St. and at Pioneer St.



(6) Lithia Way-Oak St.

Existing Design: Four-leg, 2-way stop control on Oak Street. Oak Street crosses at a 70-degree angle.

See intersection drawing under Project 5.

Deficiencies:

- Narrow sidewalks prevent adequate curb ramps.
- Long crossing distances.
- Four driveways near intersection; NW corner driveway encroaches on crosswalk.

Proposed Improvements:

- Construct curb extensions to add space for ramps and shorten crossings.
- Realign NW driveway and redevelop others in long-term.



The crosswalks are longer than necessary and the sidewalks are narrow. Three of the four corners are near driveways. A driveway at the northwest corner (photo below) actually enters the crosswalk.

Curb extensions will help correct these problems.



(7) Lithia Way-Water St.

Existing Design: One-way, single-lane, left-lane connection downhill onto Water Street. Leaves Lithia Way at a 155-degree angle.

Deficiencies:

- No crosswalk across connection.
- No sidewalk on connection.
- Sidewalk gap on southwest side of Lithia Way.
- Skewed (30 degrees), confusing intersection at bottom of connection and Water Street.

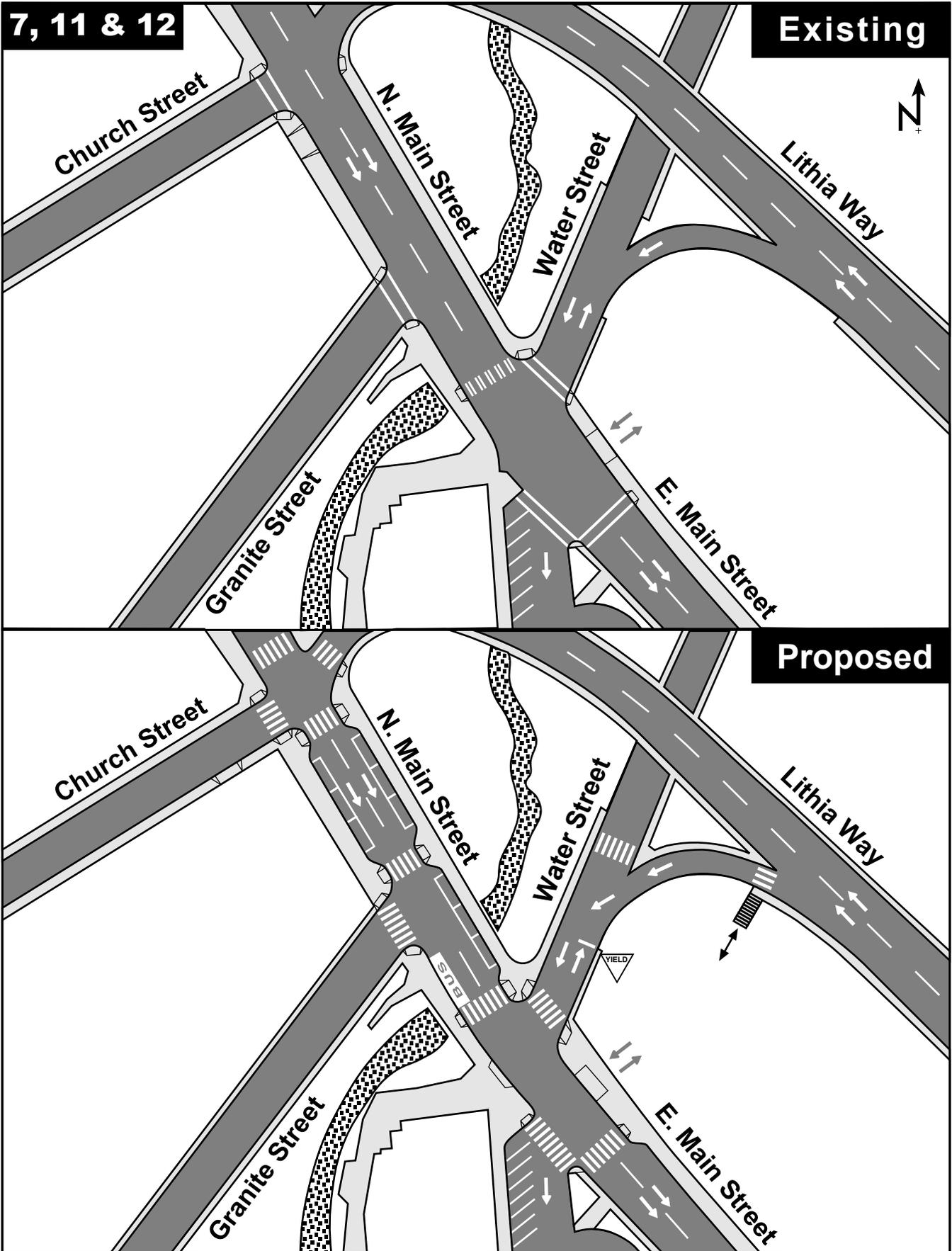
Proposed Improvements:

- Stripe crosswalk across connection at Lithia Way.
- Construct sidewalk on Lithia Way and north side of connection.
- Construct stairs to parking lot.
- Stripe intersection of connection with Water Street to clarify movement.

The one-way connection from Lithia Way to Water Street leaves the pedestrian scrambling along the road edge. What looks like a sidewalk is a narrow curb strip (small photo at lower right). There is a dirt user trail down to the parking lot below. At Water Street, the connection dumps vehicles into the oncoming lane (photo below).



Main St. at Ashland Creek



(8) Lithia Way-Church St.

Existing Design: One-way, left-lane connection onto Main Street at Church Street.

Deficiencies:

- Insufficient vehicle storage at peak times.
- No crosswalk.

Proposed Improvements:

- Stripe crosswalk across connection at Main Street.

No solution to vehicle storage is apparent. The area is too constrained for a roundabout. A second lane in the connection is not recommended because drivers in the left lane would be screened from oncoming traffic by vehicles in the right lane, and the second lane would create more complicated movements. If it becomes a great problem, the signal at Main Street-Helman Street could have an all-red phase that gives vehicles in the connection time to clear.



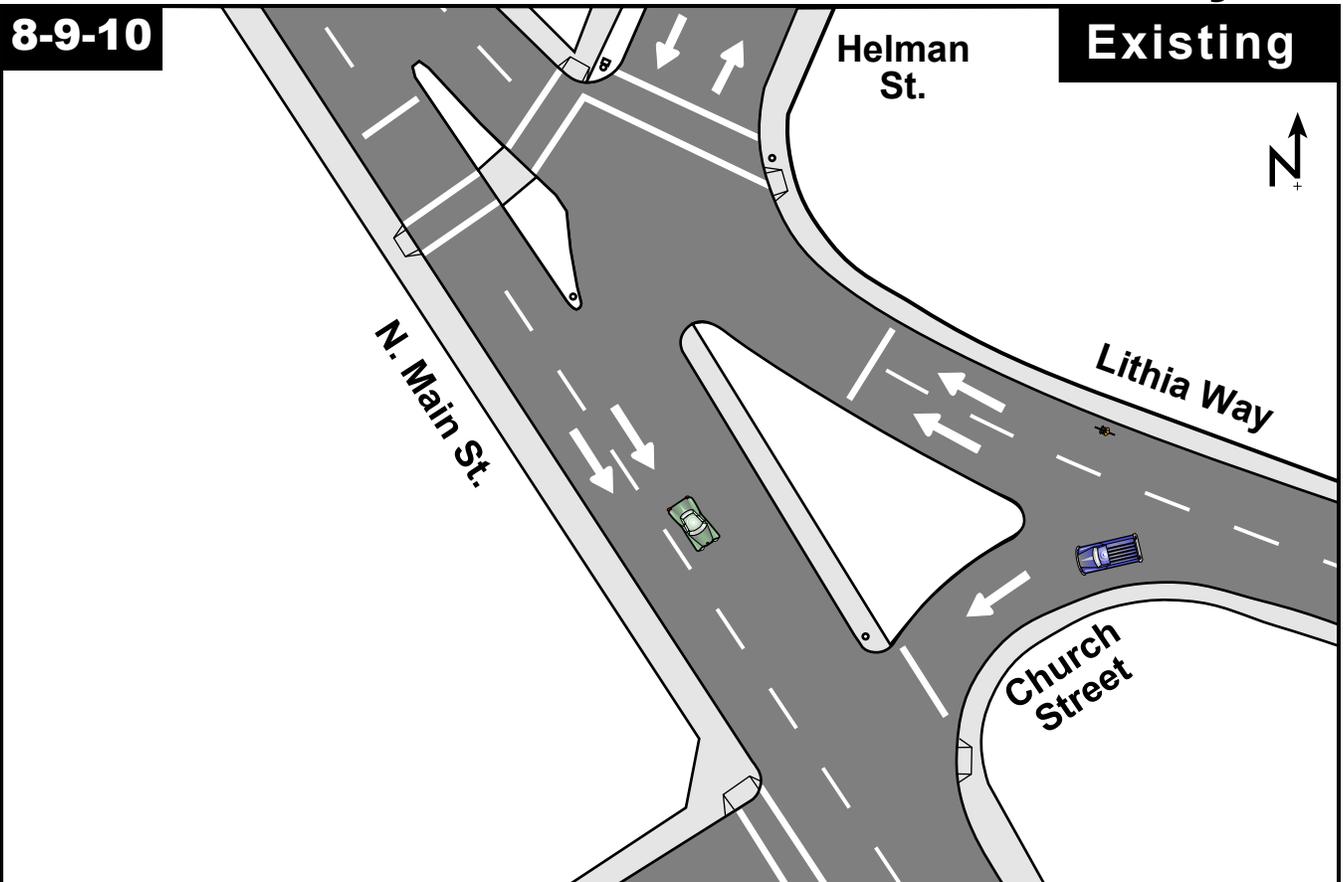
The large intersection above is where North Main Street enters downtown Ashland. Helman Street is on the left side of the photo. Lithia Way (one-way northbound) enters from the top. The short connecting street in the background is opposite Church Street (see small photo) and allows traffic on Lithia Way to return to downtown on Main Street.



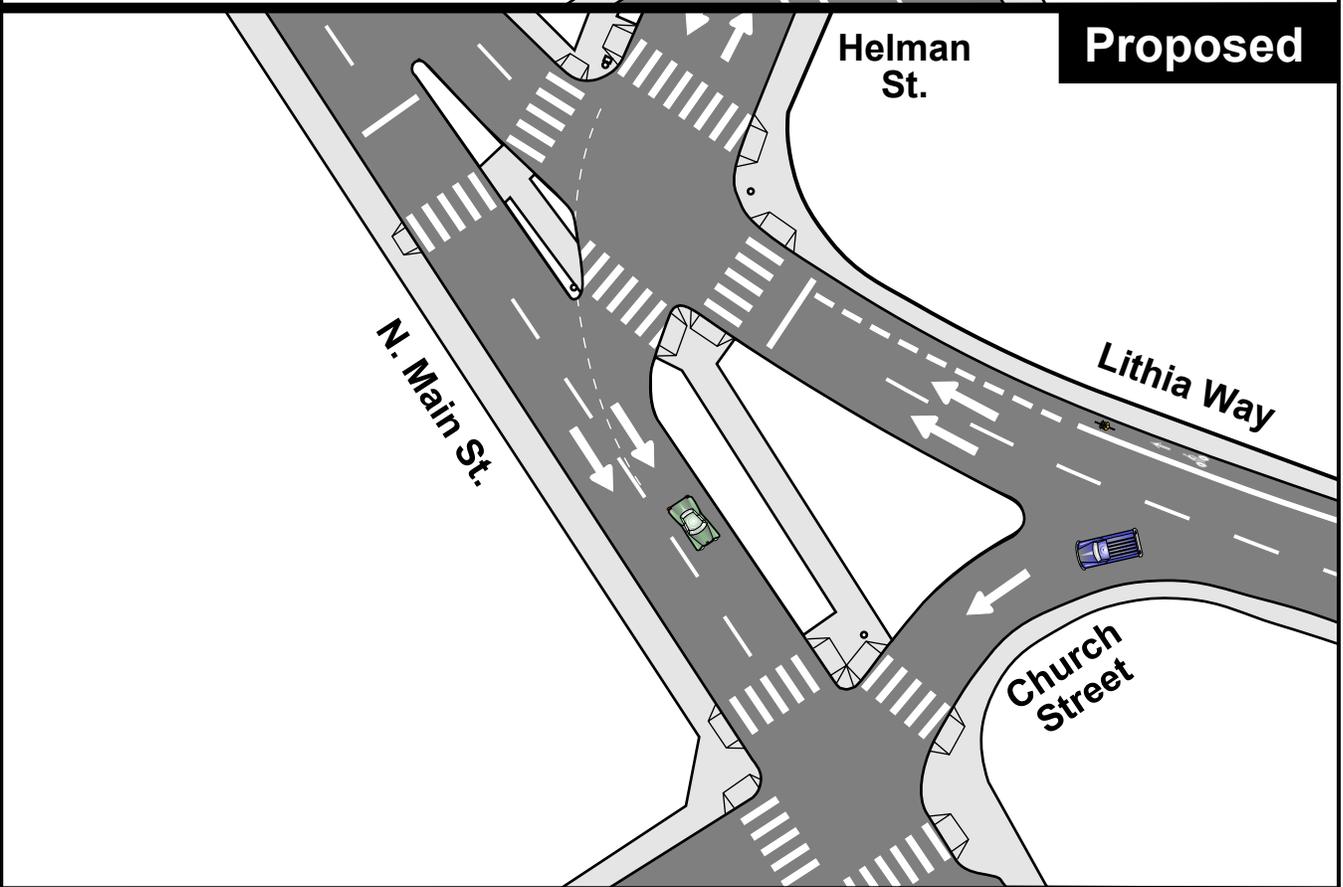
N. Main St. at Helman St. & Lithia Way

8-9-10

Existing



Proposed



(9) *Lithia Way-N. Main St.-Helman St.*

Existing Design: This signalized, 4-leg intersection is at the north end of downtown where the couplet begins. The southbound leg of the couplet (2 lanes) continues straight on North Main Street. Lithia Way (2 lanes) enters the intersection as the northbound leg of the couplet. Helman Street (2-way) forms the fourth leg of the intersection and enters at a 60-degree angle. The crosswalk on Main Street is a 2-stage crossing through an island.

See intersection drawing under Project 8.

Deficiencies:

- Vehicles enter downtown at high speed.
- Only 2 legs have crosswalks.
- The main island lacks a crosswalk.
- Helman Street has a long crosswalk and poorly placed ramps caused by narrow sidewalks, large curb returns, and an obstructing signal pole.

Proposed Improvements:

- Expand island into unused roadway to narrow Main Street.
- Reduce curb return on southeast corner.
- Construct curb extension on northwest corner.
- Add marked (zebra) crosswalks at logical crossings.
- Move stop bar forward on Lithia.

The SE corner where Lithia Way meets Helman has a very wide radius. The crosswalk misses the ramp and leads the pedestrian into a pole (top photo). Likewise, on the other side a signal pole is where the crosswalk should be and a controller box encroaches on the sidewalk (middle photo). These problems can be corrected by bringing the curb out slightly.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the intersection needs to accommodate pedestrian needs with crosswalks between islands (bottom photo).



(10) N. Main St.-Church St.

Existing Design: Four-leg, 2-way stop control on Oak Street (east leg is connection from Lithia Way, item 8 above).

See intersection drawing under Project 8.

Deficiencies:

- No crosswalks on 3 legs.
- Driveway near southwest corner interferes with sidewalk and curb ramp placement.

Proposed Improvements:

- Stripe crosswalks on all legs.
- Construct curb extensions on south corners to add space for ramps and shorten crossings.
- Move driveway to side street (will change parking lot configuration).

Church Street is the beginning of the pedestrian-oriented businesses. The street width should narrow and the frequency of crosswalks increase.



(11) N. Main St.-Granite St.

Existing Design: Three-leg, 2-way stop-control on Granite Street. Granite enters highway at about an 80 degree angle. Short distance to nearest intersections: 175 feet to Church Street and 120 feet to Water Street.

Deficiencies:

- No crosswalks on 2 legs.
- Traffic still speeding into downtown.

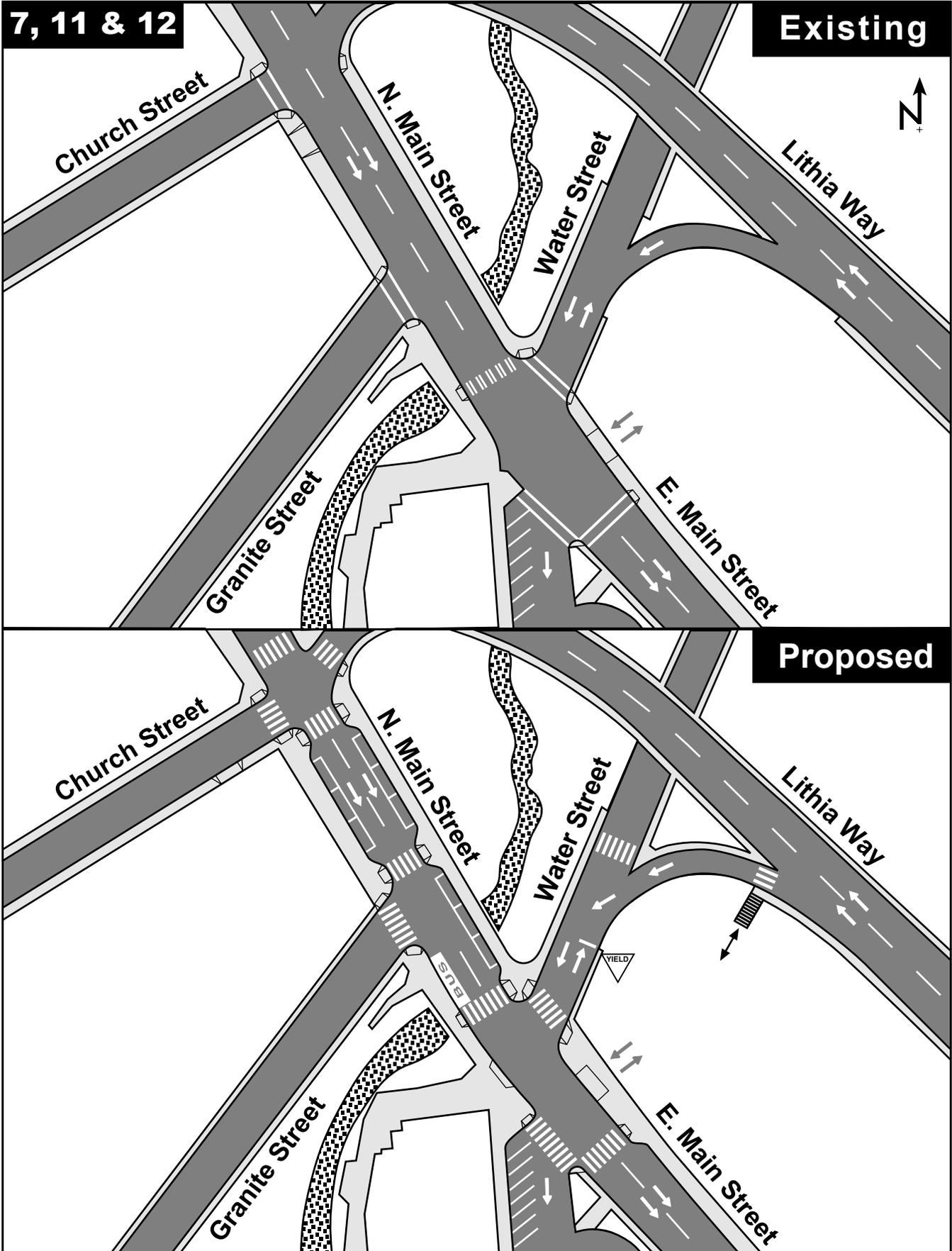
Proposed Improvements:

- Stripe crosswalk on north leg (south leg left unstriped so as to not interfere with adjacent bus stop and because next crosswalk is nearby).
- Construct curb extension on northwest corner to add space for ramp and shorten crossing.
- Mark bus stop aggressively for traffic calming.

Granite Street is next to the creek and near the Plaza. Pedestrians should be able to cross the highway easily, and drivers should already be well within the 25 mph posted speed. Curb extensions and aggressive pavement markings will help.



Main St. at Ashland Creek



(12) N. Main St.-E. Main St.-Water St.

Existing Design: This 4-leg intersection is the main vehicle entry to the Plaza. The highway is one-way southbound and transitions from North Main Street to East Main Street. It is 2 lanes until the next block where a lane is added at Oak Street.

The highway curves to the left. The cross streets—Water Street (2-way) and North Main Street (1-way into the Plaza)—are offset and angled. North Main Street exits at a 150 degree angle. Water Street enters at a 55 degree angle.

Deficiencies:

- Large intersection with poor sight lines.
- Long crossing distances.
- Poor ramp placement because of narrow sidewalks.

Proposed Improvements:

- Construct curb extensions on east corners to add space for ramps, shorten crossings, and provide westbound cars better sight distance before entering the intersection.
- Driveway may eventually be removed when lot is redeveloped from present use as parking lot.
- Start bike lane.

The crosswalks are longer than the street is wide because of offset ramps. Curb extensions will help shorten the crossings. Note the only existing zebra stripe crosswalk—all crosswalks should be of this type for visibility.



See intersection drawing under Project 11.

(13) N. Main St.-Oak St.

Existing Design: This 4-leg intersection is the main vehicle outlet from the Plaza. It is also a primary pedestrian connection to the theaters to the west and to the Plaza. The previous crosswalk is at North Main Street about 300 feet away—a moderate distance but many pedestrians were observed to cross mid-block to get to the Plaza.



The highway is one-way southbound and enters the north leg as 2 lanes where the outlet from the Plaza enters at an acute angle (15 degrees) to add a third lane. The Plaza lane also has a channel that allows vehicles to proceed across the intersection to Oak Street (2-way stop controlled).

The various vehicle movements combine with on-street parking to make the intersection difficult for pedestrians, especially on the south and east crosswalks where cars may be approaching from multiple legs at once. Cars were even observed swinging around the second island and over the south crosswalk (a shallow U-turn) to reach Oak Street.

Several walkways and vehicle ways converge on this intersection.

There are several possible approaches to improving this intersection:

1. Close the turn channel from the Plaza lane by extending the main island through the intersection to the crosswalk but keep 3 lanes. Drivers who want to turn to the east would have to continue on to Pioneer Street (200 feet away). In congested conditions the crossing movement to the left lane at Pioneer could be difficult, in which case the driver would have to wait before merging left or continue on to the next cross street. There would not be room for a bike lane if the third lane remains.

A 2-stage, angles crosswalk connects to a walkway leading to the theaters. The opposite (south) crosswalk on Main Street is nearly 50 feet long. Both crosswalks can be improved by removing the left turn.



2. (Recommended) Close the turn channel from the Plaza lane by extending the main island through the intersection to the crosswalk and replace the third lane with angle parking on the east side and a bike lane on the west side. This does away with the merge lane but shortens the crossover distance to turn left on Pioneer Street. The bike lane must cross over the Plaza outlet; the problem here is that the driver of a merging vehicle may be looking over their shoulder for oncoming traffic and may lose sight of a cyclist who is crossing over. It is important that the bike lane be visible (a colored lane such as used in Portland may help) and that the yield condition for Plaza traffic be strongly indicated (signs and pavement markings).
3. Reconfigure the Plaza outlet to a more conventional intersection to the north. This has the advantage of maintaining an option to turn onto Oak Street and of consolidating space now occupied by narrow islands. The added space could be used for public space, a rest room, or a large tree. Compared to option 2 above there would be gain of about 6 parking stalls because the revised roadway alignment would accommodate more angle parking between Oak and Pioneer Streets. This option is not recommended because it would involve a major reworking of the Plaza. It is something to consider should the Plaza be redesigned in the future.

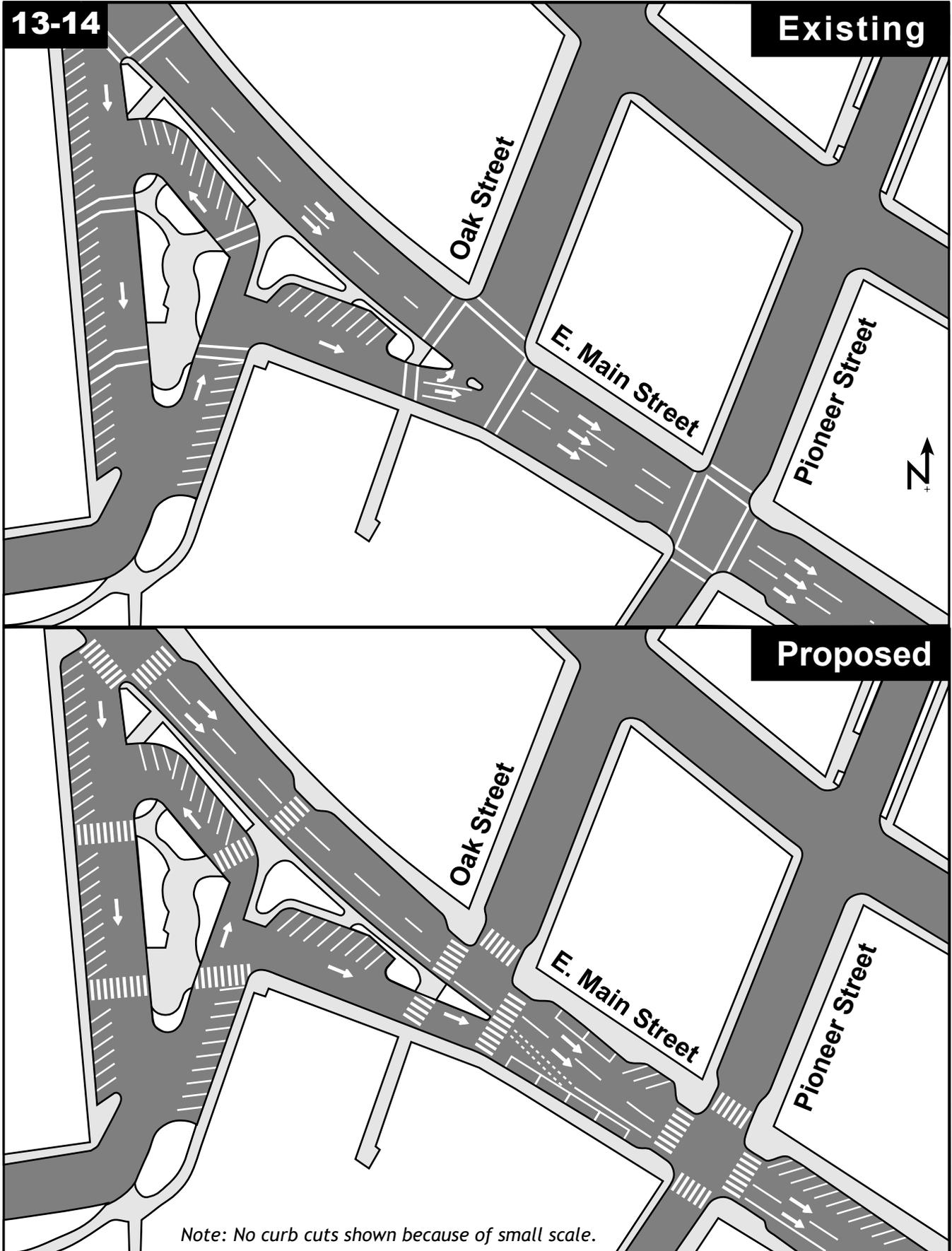
Deficiencies:

- Long block from Water Street to Oak Street without crosswalk.
- Long crossing distances.
- Poor crosswalk alignment on north leg (2-stage crossing).
- Confusing vehicle movements with multiple threats to pedestrians.

Proposed Improvements:

- Construct curb extensions on east corners to shorten crossing distances.
- Add mid-block crossing and curb extension between Water Street and Oak Street.
- Stripe bike lane between North Main Street and Oak Street and continue through merge lane from Plaza.
- Extend island nose at Oak Street to eliminate left turn.

Main St. at Ashland Plaza



(14) N. Main St.-Pioneer St.

Existing Design: Four-leg, signalized intersection. The east leg of Pioneer Street enters at a slight angle (about 80 degrees). There are curb extensions on 3 corners (all except the northeast corner).

See intersection drawing under Project 13.

Deficiencies:

- Long crossing distances.
- Poor crosswalk alignment.

Proposed Improvements:

- Enlarge and square off curb extensions on east corners.
- Stripe two lanes with angle parking and bike lane.



(15) Mid-Block Crossing Between on N. Main St. (between Pioneer St. and 1st St.)

Existing Design: The longest block on Main Street is the 500 feet between Pioneer Street and 1st Street. There are 2 passageways between buildings on the west side.

Deficiencies:

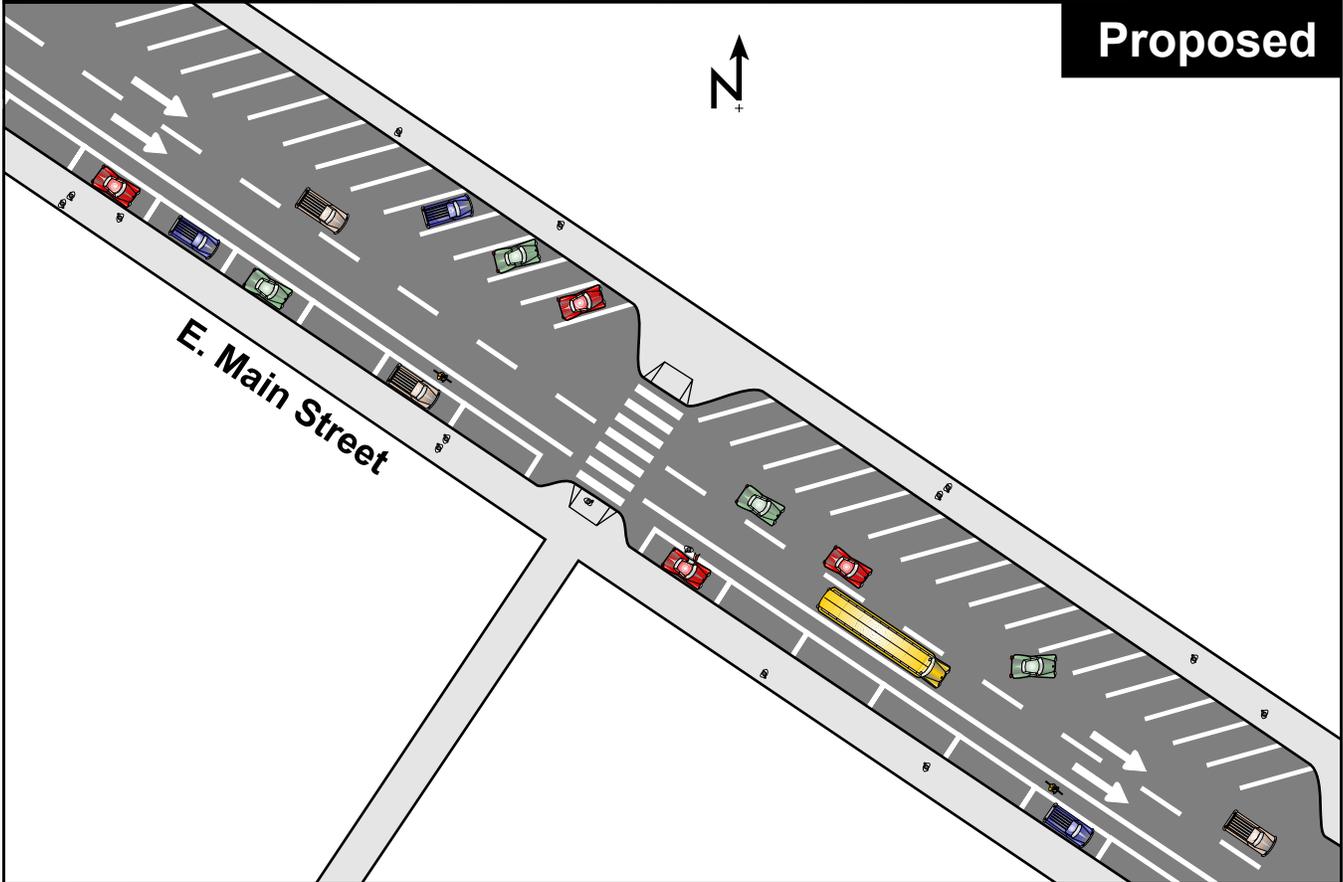
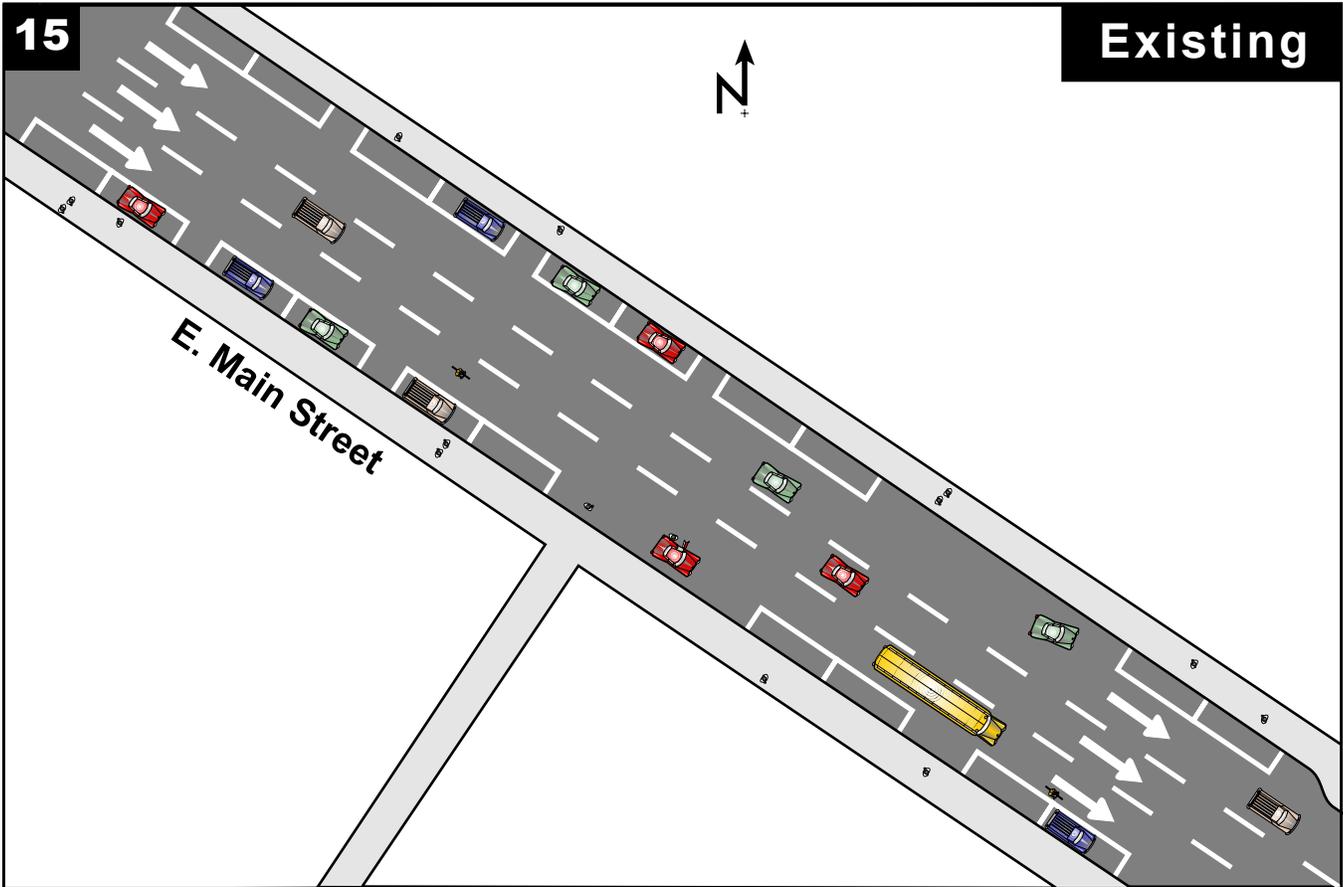
- Long distance between crosswalks (almost 500 feet).
- Long crossing distance between curbs (54 feet).

Proposed Improvements:

- Stripe mid-block crosswalk.
- Construct curb extensions to reduce crossing length to 32 feet.
- Stripe two lanes with angle parking and bike lane.



East Main St. between Pioneer St. & 1st St.



(16) N. Main St.-1st St.

Existing Design: Four-leg, 2-way stop control on 1st Street. The 2 legs of 1st Street are offset about 20 feet. There are curb extensions on 3 corners (all except the southeast corner). A 46-foot long driveway on Main Street near the southeast corner accesses a bank parking lot and drive-up window.

Deficiencies:

- Poor ramp placement due to narrow sidewalks and skewed intersection.
- Long crossing distance on south leg.
- Long driveway at bank.

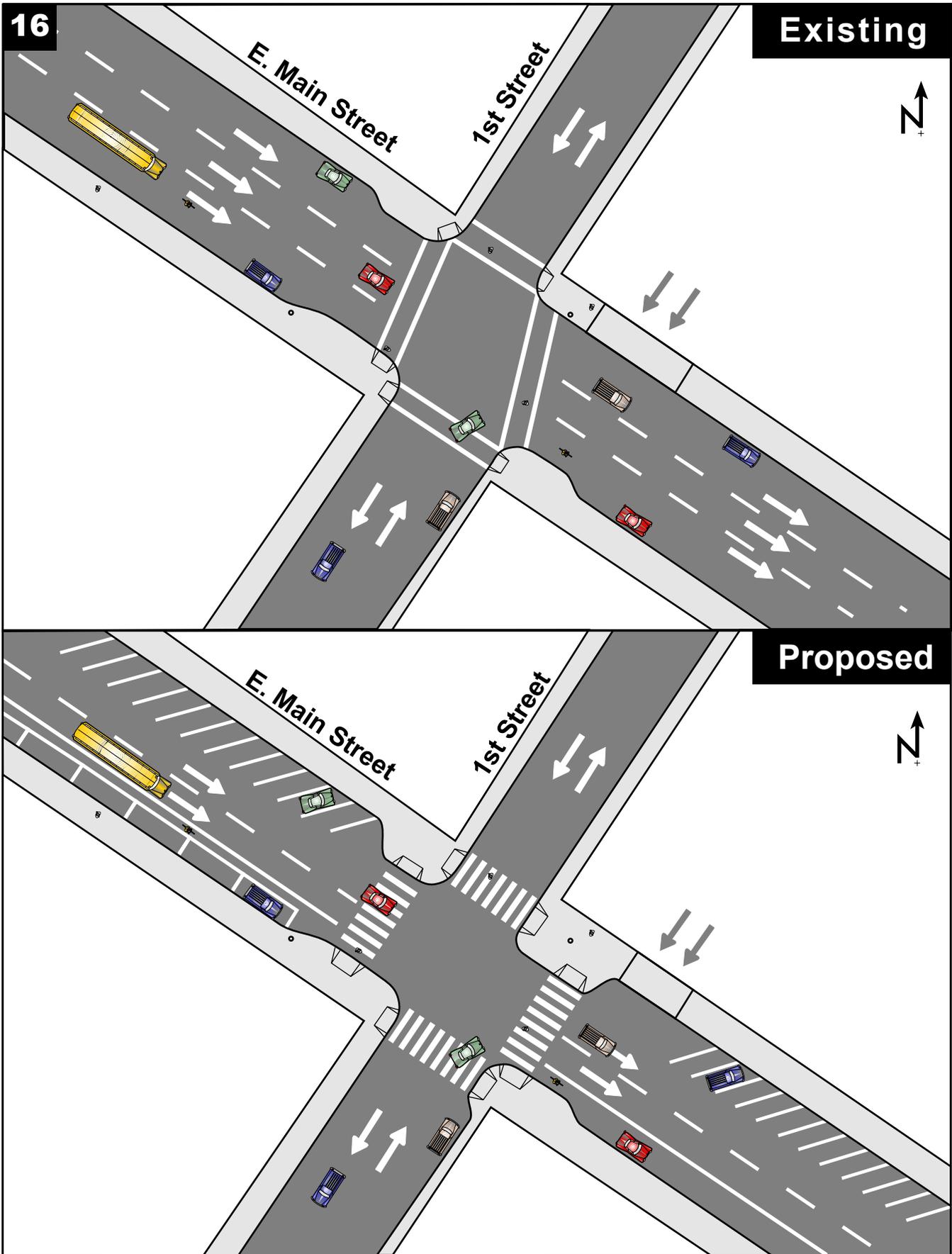
Proposed Improvements:

- Enlarge curb extensions to add space for ramps and shorten crossings.
- Shorten driveway.
- Stripe roadway with 2 lanes, angle parking, and bike lane.

A 46-foot driveway should be shortened or moved to the side street. Curb extensions will open up the sidewalks for better ramp placement, more public space, and shorter crossing distance.



East Main St. at 1st St.



(17) N. Main St.-2nd St.

Existing Design: Four-leg, 2-way stop control on 2nd Street. The 2 legs of 2nd Street are offset about 40 feet. The east leg enters Main Street at a 110-degree angle. There are curb extensions on all corners.

Deficiencies:

- Poor ramp placement due to poles and skewed intersection.
- Planter box and pole on southwest corner obscure crosswalk.
- Planters narrow sidewalk to less than 6 feet.
- Long crossing distance.

Proposed Improvements:

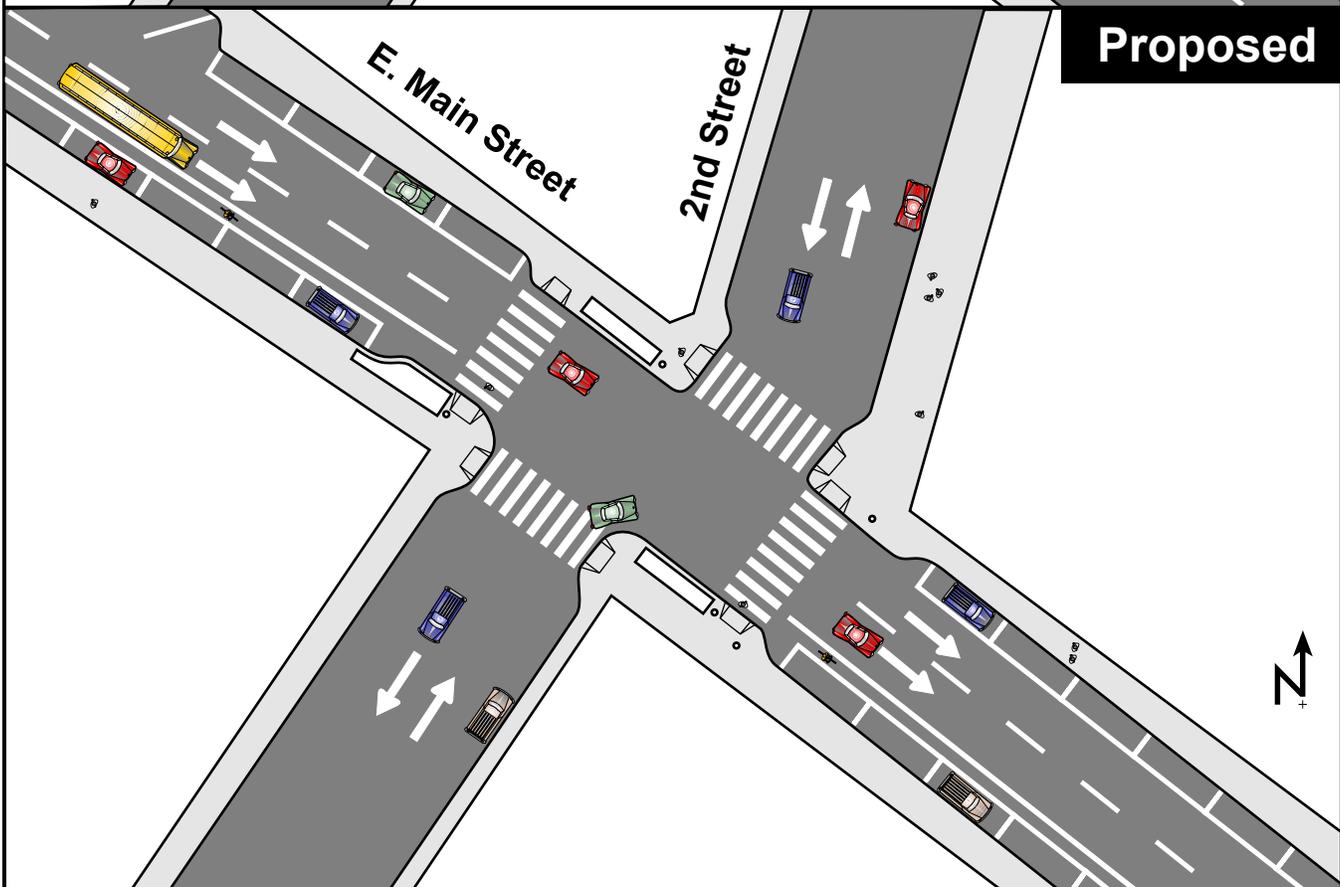
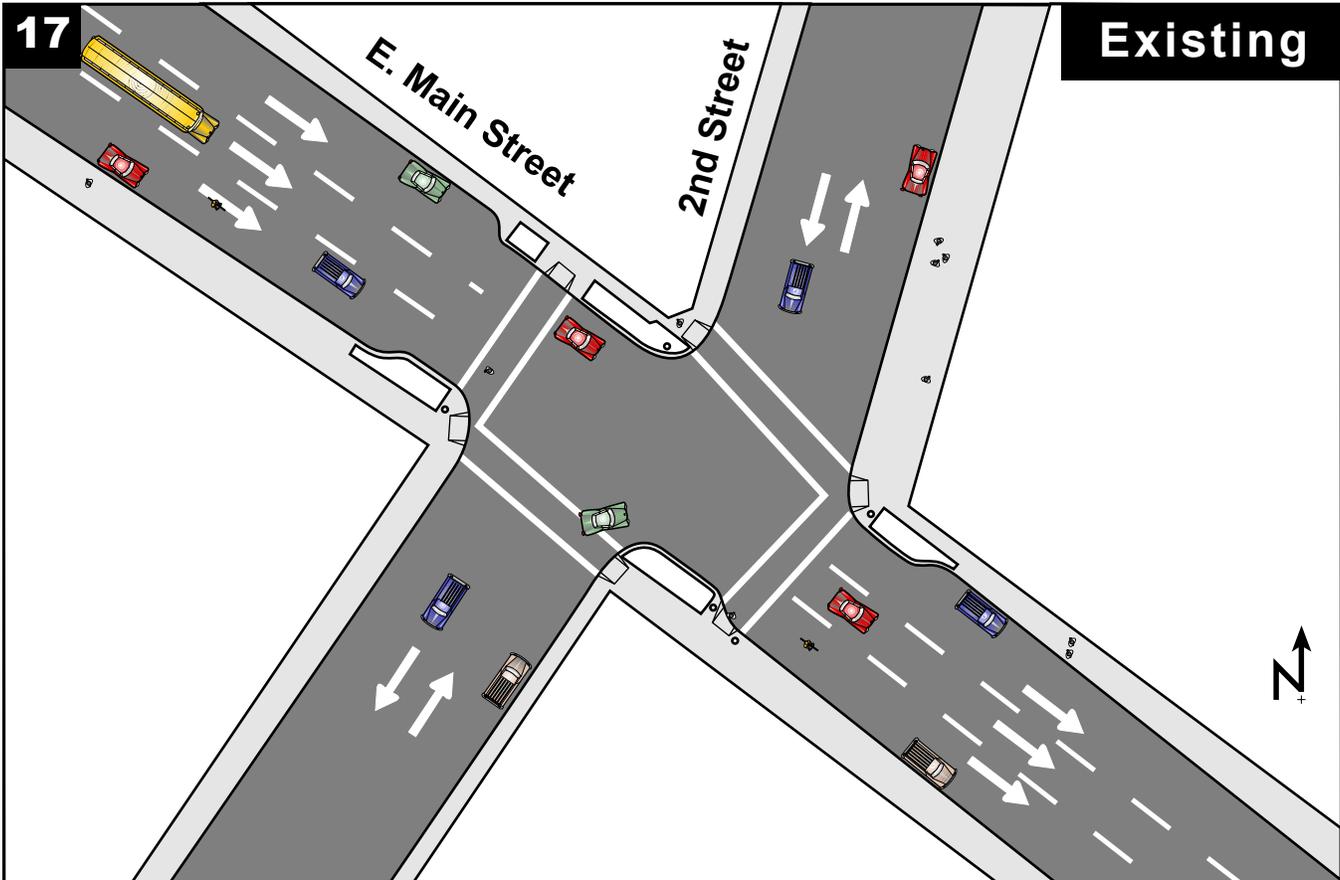
- Enlarge curb extensions to provide more space for poles and ramps.
- Install smaller planter boxes and lower landscaping (done).
- Stripe roadway with 2 lanes, parallel parking, and bike lane.



A pedestrian standing at the curb ramp on the SW corner is hidden by landscaping and a pole (top photo taken in April). The broken planter and overgrown plants were later fixed (bottom photo taken in June).

The crossing is still partially obscured from drivers by poles and is over 46 feet long.

East Main St. at 2nd St.



(18) N. Main St.-3rd St.-Gresham St.

Existing Design: Four-leg, 2-way stop control on 3rd Street/Gresham Street. The 3rd Street/Gresham Street legs are offset about 80 feet. The west leg (Gresham) enters Main Street at a 50-degree angle. The east leg (3rd) enters Main Street at a 70-degree angle and is one-way. There are shallow curb extensions on 3 corners (all except the southeast corner).

Deficiencies:

- Large intersection with long crossing distances.
- Traffic tends to accelerate to leave downtown.
- Planters narrow sidewalk to less than 6 feet.

Proposed Improvements:

- Narrow roadway to 2 lanes and bike lane, leading into roundabout at Siskiyou Blvd.
- Realign Gresham Street to center of intersection.
- Construct splitter islands on 3rd Street and Gresham Street.
- Expand curb extensions and sidewalks.

See intersection drawing under Project 1.



The crosswalk on the north leg of the intersection crosses 3 lanes between shallow curb extensions. The crossing can be shortened by removing a lane and extending the curbs fully.



Over 13,000 cars a day pass over the crosswalk on the south side of the intersection. Pedestrians were observed sprinting across for good reason: gaps close quickly with 4 travel lanes, traffic coming from 3 streets, lane changes, and acceleration onto Siskiyou Blvd.



3.4 *Streets Project Summary*

There are many potential projects described above that could be done in various combinations and variations. The key aspects are summarized below.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. E. Main St.-Lithia Way-Siskiyou Blvd. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct roundabout. 2. Lithia Way-3rd St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marked crosswalk. • Curb extensions (2). • Expanded island. • Realigned driveway. • Bike lane throughout. 3. Lithia Way-2nd St.-"C" St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curb extensions (2). • Extended sidewalk. 4. Lithia Way-1st St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curb extensions (4). • Relocated mail drop-off. 5. Lithia Way-Pioneer St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curb extensions (3). • Shortened driveways. 6. Lithia Way-Oak St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curb extensions (3). • Realigned alley. 7. Lithia Way-Water St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marked crosswalk. • Sidewalk. • Stairs. • Striped intersection. 8. Lithia Way-Church St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marked crosswalk. 9. Lithia Way-N. Main St.-Helman St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded island. • Reduced curb return. • Curb extension. • Marked crosswalks. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. N. Main St.-Church St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marked crosswalks. • Curb extensions (2). • Realigned driveway. 11. N. Main St.-Granite St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marked crosswalk. • Curb extensions (2). • Marked bus stop. 12. N. Main St.-E. Main St.-Water St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curb extensions (2). • Bike lane throughout. 13. N. Main St.-Oak St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curb extensions (2). • Mid-block crossing. • Extended island. • Angle parking started. 14. N. Main St.-Pioneer St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded curb extensions (2). 15. N. Main St. Between Pioneer St. and 1st St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-block crosswalk. 16. N. Main St.-1st St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded curb extensions (2). • Shortened driveway. 17. N. Main St.-2nd St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded curb extensions (4). 18. N. Main St.-3rd St.-Gresham St. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrowed roadway. • Realigned Gresham Street. • Splitter islands. • Expanded curb extensions (2). |
|---|---|

Section 4: Parking Plan

4.1 *Background*

Several studies have been completed that either touch on or focus on the issue of parking and transportation as they influence access and development in Ashland. These documents provide a solid and sophisticated foundation of information; ideas, data and visioning from which the recommendations incorporated in this memorandum are derived. A brief summary of these studies is outlined below.

4.1.1 *1988 Downtown Plan*

The 1988 Downtown Plan sought to create a “definition of the community’s shared vision of the downtown. The document served as an excellent guideline for directing efforts in the area of the physical development of the downtown, parking, the pedestrian environment, new development, public art and fountains. In the area of parking issues, the Plan summarized specific findings and objectives:

◇ Findings

- 1630 parking stalls. Projected future need for 2300.
- Core spaces operating at capacity, periphery at approximately 65%.
- Need for more “connection” and “communication” between demand and availability.
- New parking should be located to “encourage pedestrian travel through the entire downtown.”

◇ Objectives

- Add 8 new parking facilities (combination of lots and decks).
- Evaluate leasing space from private developments.
- Improve efficiency of on-street system.
- Net 703 new parking stalls.

4.1.2 *Ashland In Action 2000*

Ashland in Action 2000 is a comprehensive action plan for guiding efforts in the area of transportation, parking and transit. The Plan presents a balanced approach to multi-modal access planning to meet Ashland’s future and desired growth. Specific goals in the plan include:

- Development of multi-modal access system.
- Reduction of drive alone trips through parking management (possible paid parking).
- Provide a free transit system.

- Improve pedestrian areas and amenities.
- Increase parking supply.
- Develop funding mechanisms.

4.1.3 Ashland Downtown Parking Analysis (1999/2000)

The City of Ashland conducted a thorough analysis of downtown parking utilization and capacity in the Summer of 1999 and Fall of 2000. The analysis captures average parking occupancies across typical days between the hours of 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. Major findings of the study revealed:

- 1414 total parking stalls.
- Peak occupancy of 92% in summer (core nodes – B, D, E, F).
- Peak occupancy of 80+% in fall (core nodes – B, D, E).
- Capacity available in nodes A, C, & L1.
- Good distribution of parking by use (i.e., short-term in core, long-term on periphery).

An unanswered issue from the analysis is a lack of data on average duration and turnover (on- and off-street). Future inventories should include this data to ascertain actual time stay (duration) by time zone type (e.g., 2 and 4-hour zones) to measure the degree to which the parking supply is being maximized.

4.1.4 Nelson/Nygaard Downtown Parking Peer Review

The Nelson/Nygaard Downtown Parking Peer Review examined five cities that have transitioned from free parking environments to paid parking environments. The purpose of the review was to answer questions related to the impact of parking pricing on visitor populations, residential areas and the overall health of the areas where parking pricing was imposed. Major findings of the review included:

- Parking pricing did not adversely affect visitor demand or use.
- Parking pricing improved turnover.
- Revenues generated exceeded expenses.
- Shuttle services had mixed results.
- New technology multi-space metering systems all used effectively.

4.2 *Phase II Study – Key Issues*

Review of background materials and discussions with stakeholders revealed a number of concerns with parking in the downtown. Stakeholder concerns are especially important and valid since the input comes from those who use the downtown and from business owners/operators who are affected most by the parking characteristics of the downtown. Several key issues include:

- Concern that the existing supply is currently “at capacity” during peak days and seasons.
- Suspicion that employees are using core area short-term parking, thereby reducing “capacity” for customers and visitors.
- A desire to balance short-term “retail” parking, theater patron and employee parking demand in a manner that continues to support downtown vitality.
- A desire to make best use of off-street facilities both in and outside of the core area.
- The need for a better system/plan for communicating parking to users (e.g., signage, marketing).
- Concern that “pricing” parking will have a negative effect on customer traffic.
- The need for a plan that assures maximum utilization of the supply to meet intended uses.

The issues outlined above are not intended to represent all concerns about parking that have been expressed in public meetings and previous studies. Rather, they are intended to serve as broad parking themes that appear to have been consistently expressed in various forums and studies. The parking management plan outlined below attempts to provide a framework through which each of these issues could be reasonably addressed.

4.3 *Development of a Parking Management Strategy*

The approach to development of a parking management plan includes the following steps:

- a. Identify the critical parking issues through sound data analysis (i.e., capacity/utilization inventory) and the public involvement process.
- b. Determine discrete “parking management zones” based on existing parking conditions, land uses and needs.
- c. Develop overall guiding principles for each parking management zone.
- d. Develop parking management strategies that meet the overall goals of downtown, support the guiding principles for each district, and address existing parking issues.
- e. Formulate the parking strategies into a comprehensive plan for near, mid and long-term implementation.

4.4 *Recommendations for Ashland*

4.4.1 *Near-Term Actions*

- ◇ **Enhance existing parking inventory database to include turnover data.**

The Ashland Downtown Parking Analysis (1999/2000) provides excellent information on parking utilization and peak hour capacity. However, the analysis lacks turnover data, which would allow an understanding of whether or not intended time stays (i.e., 2-hour, 4-hour, etc.) are being honored.

The need for turnover data is very important as a foundation piece for determining actions to maximize parking supply. Table 4-1 illustrates the impact that turnover can have on “capacity.” In short, if turnover in time zones is less than intended, actions to improve turnover (i.e., increased enforcement) can create capacity without the need for additional supply or more aggressive parking management.

*Table 4-1.
Impact of
Turnover on
Inventory
Capacity*

# Parking Stalls	Time Zone	Average Duration (hrs)	Turnover @ 10 hours	Total Trip Capacity
100	2 hours	3 hours	3.33 cars	333 trips
100	2 hours	2 hours	5.0 cars	500 trips
100	2 hours	1.5 hours	6.66 cars	666 trips

- ◇ **Review enforcement activities to assure that existing time zones are honored.**

Based on the results of the turnover analysis, adjust enforcement activities to assure that desired time stays and turnover rates are achieved. Turnover rates can be established by dividing the desired time stay into Ashland’s “operating day.” From the Ashland Downtown Parking Analysis (1999/2000) it appears that Ashland’s parking activity remains fairly high over a 10-hour period. Given this, a 2-hour zone would have an intended turnover rate of 5 cars per day (i.e., 10 hour operating day divided by 2 hour zone) a 4- hour zone would have an intended rate of 2.5.

Periodically monitoring turnover rates will allow Ashland to (a) better coordinate enforcement, (b) assure maximum utilization based on intended uses and (c) provide solid evidence for the need to move to higher and/or more aggressive levels of parking management.

- ◇ **Establish fewer “parking management zones” based on desired economic uses and user types.**

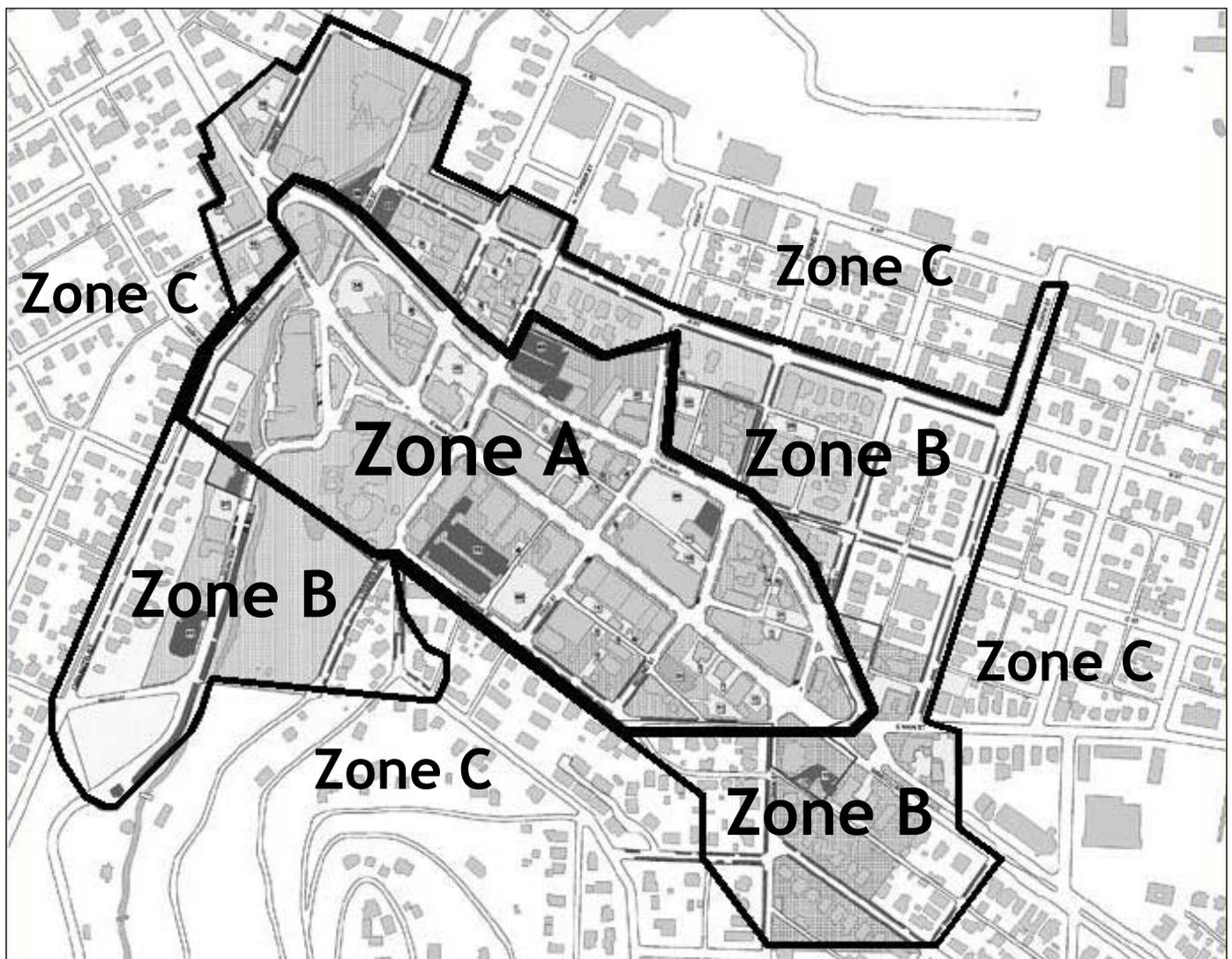
Different segments of the downtown have different economic uses and represent different points of access into the downtown. The heart of downtown should represent the area in which the highest density of economic activity and access is intended to occur. Parking should be seen as a management tool that supports specific economic uses. The desired economic activity in a particular area of downtown should drive the decision making for the type of parking required.

The Ashland Downtown Parking Analysis (1999/2000) divided the downtown into seven “parking nodes.” For purposes of data collection, these nodes are appropriate. However, for purposes of evaluating and managing the day to day dynamics of parking activity, it is recommended that three “parking management zones” be established:

1. Nodes B, D, E, F to Zone A (Core).
2. Nodes A, C, L1 to Zone B (Intermediate).
3. Adjacent areas into Zone C (Periphery).

Figure 4-1 illustrates the recommended zones for downtown Ashland.

Figure 4-1
Parking Management Zones



- ◇ **Develop “Guiding Principles” defining the priority purpose/use of each parking management zone and adopt them as a policy element of the parking code.**

Guiding principles are established to describe the primary purposes for parking within each parking management zone. They set the standard that guide decision-making for parking management both near-term and long-term. Once established, Guiding Principles for Parking Management should be adopted by the City of Ashland as a policy element of the parking code to inform future management as well as development of future public facilities.

Guiding Principles (Recommended)

Zone A (Core)

- The purpose of, and priority for, parking in the Core of downtown is to support and enhance the vitality of the retail/theater core.
- Parking will be provided to assure convenient, economical, and user-friendly access for customers, clients, and visitors to downtown.
- Priority will be given to short-term, visitor parking (both on- and off-street) in this parking zone.

Zone B (Intermediate)

- Parking in the Intermediate Zone is established to provide longer-term stay opportunities.
- It is the City’s goal to further support the long-term development of this zone as an expansion of the retail/theater core.
- Parking in this zone is intended to be convenient, supportive of business activity, and user-friendly.

Zone C (Periphery)

- Parking in this zone is unregulated. As such, no time stays are in effect. Future management strategies assumed for this area will be contingent on the parking activity, capacity, and utilization of all other parking zones.

4.4.2 *Mid-Term Actions*

◇ **Parking Management Strategies**

As described above, different areas of the downtown core experience different types of demand and should respond by providing parking that is appropriate. This is best accomplished by identifying the central purpose of each zone and establishing a comprehensive set of strategies to be applied within that zone.

Zone A (Core)

Purpose: The purpose of and priority for, parking in the Core of downtown is to support and enhance the vitality of the retail/theater core.

- A. All on-street parking will be either 2-hour or 4-hour parking based on the belief that:
 1. the 2-hour time stay allows adequate customer, visitor and client access to the retail core;
 2. the 4-hour time stay, appropriately located to the theater district, allows adequate access for patrons of the theater; and
 3. uniform time stays foster a parking environment that is easy for the customer, visitor, client and theater patron to understand.
- B. The long-term priority for on street parking in the Core will be 2-hour parking. As strategies within this plan are implemented, 4-hour on-street spaces will be transitioned to off-street locations within the Core Zone and immediately adjacent to it.
- C. The priority for off-street parking in the Core will be 4-hour parking to accommodate customers, visitors, clients and theater patrons. These facilities are intended to provide for a moderately longer time stay than allowed on street. If pricing is in effect at these locations, the hourly rate for parking for the first four hours of parking will be the same as that in effect for the on-street parking system. Rates after 4-hours will be set to discourage high rates of long-term, “all day” use in these facilities.
- D. The City will conduct regular utilization and capacity studies to ascertain the actual peak hour utilization and average turnover of parking resources in the Core area. If utilization of on- and off-street parking in Zone A exceeds 85% and turnover meets desired rates, the City will evaluate and implement one, or a combination of, the following implementation steps “triggered” by the 85% threshold:
 1. Increase level of enforcement to assure desired rate of turnover.
 2. Transition employee parking in Zone A into another parking Zone.
 3. Transition overall mix of “short-term” stalls to higher percentage of 2-hour stalls.

4. Reduce on-street time stays to increase turnover (e.g., 2-hours to 90 minutes, 4-hours to 2-hours).
 5. Expand the boundaries of the Core management zone to increase the number of on-street visitor spaces.
 6. Meter/charge for parking (on- and/or off-street) to create greater efficiency in actual rate of turnover.
 7. Increase non-SOV use (i.e., programs for shuttles, transit, ridesharing).
 8. Create new supply.
- E. The City will establish policy guidelines for exceptions to the short-term parking requirements in the Core Zone.
1. Handicapped/disabled access.
 2. 15 minute zones.
 - a. Specific criteria for approval (i.e., by specific business type).
 - b. Specific locations (i.e., end of block vs. mid block).
 - c. Number per geographic area (i.e., should be shared by users in a particular area).
 3. Loading zones
 - a. Maximum number per block face(s).
 - b. Limitation on number per geographic area (e.g., no more than two for every three continuous block faces).
 - c. Establish limited time stay loading spaces (as appropriate) to preserve short-term use after peak loading periods.

Zone B (Intermediate).

Purpose: Parking in the Intermediate Zone is established to provide longer-term stay opportunities and to further support the long-term development of this zone as an expansion of the retail/theater core.

- A. All on-street parking will be “no limit” parking based on the belief that:
1. This time stay is conducive to employees and longer term visitor parking for the downtown;
 2. The current economic uses in the Zone do now as yet require the type of turnover ratios necessary to Zone A (Core).
- B. The long-term priority for on street parking in the Intermediate Zone will be 2-hour and 4-hour parking. As strategies within this plan are implemented, “no-limit” parking will be transitioned to off-street locations within the Intermediate Zone and immediately adjacent to it.

- C. The priority for off-street parking in the Intermediate Zone will be “no limit” parking to accommodate the full range of users, including employees, customers, visitors, clients and theater patrons. These facilities are intended to provide for long term stay opportunities. If pricing is in effect at these locations, the hourly rate for parking for the first four hours of parking will be the same as that in effect for the on-street parking system. Longer-term rates are intended to be less than those charged in the Core to facilitate and attract longer-term users, especially during peak weekday use periods.
- D. The City will conduct regular utilization and capacity studies to ascertain the actual peak hour utilization and average turnover of parking resources in the Intermediate Zone. If utilization of on- and off-street parking in Zone B exceeds 85% and turnover meets desired rates, the City will evaluate and implement one, or a combination of, the following implementation steps “triggered” by the 85% threshold:
1. Increase level of enforcement to assure desired rate of turnover.
 2. Transition employee parking in Zone B into another parking Zone, “satellite locations” or into alternative transportation modes.
 3. Transition overall mix of “no-limit” stalls to higher percentage of 4-hour stalls.
 4. Reduce on-street time stays to increase turnover.
 5. Expand the boundaries of the Intermediate management zone to increase the number of on-street long-term spaces.
 6. Meter/charge for parking (on- and/or off-street) to create greater efficiency in actual rate of turnover.
 7. Increase non-SOV use (i.e., programs for shuttles, transit, ridesharing).
 8. Create new supply.
- E. The City will establish policy guidelines for exceptions to the parking requirements in the Intermediate Zone.
1. Handicapped/disabled access.
 2. 15 minute zones.
 - a. Specific criteria for approval (i.e., by specific business type).
 - b. Specific locations (i.e., end of block vs. mid block).
 - c. Number per geographic area (i.e., should be shared by users in a particular area).
 3. Loading zones
 - a. Maximum number per block face(s).
 - b. Limitation on number per geographic area (e.g., no more than two for every three continuous block faces).

- c. Establish limited time stay loading spaces (as appropriate) to preserve short-term use after peak loading periods.

Zone C (Periphery)

Purpose: Parking in this zone is unregulated. As such, no time stays are in effect. Future management strategies assumed for this area will be contingent on the parking activity, capacity, and utilization of all other parking zones.

◇ Other Issues (Parking Management)

Pricing

- A. Meter on-street parking to increase efficiency and capacity.

As the 85% Rule triggers additional and more aggressive management of the supply, Ashland may consider pricing parking to (a) facilitate more efficient turn-over, (b) encourage use of specific facilities in specific management zones (i.e., short-term vs. employee parking), (c) encourage use of alternative modes, and (d) provide funding source for new supply and alternative mode options.

In the context of pricing, Ashland should consider new technologies available and in place in other cities that allow for flexibility in the management of parking pricing and contribute and complement Ashland's existing and desired urban form (see, Nelson/Nygaard, Downtown Parking Peer Review)

- B. Charge for parking in publicly owned off-street facilities.

The City should establish a policy for pricing in publicly owned off-street facilities. The framework of such a policy is provided below:

1. "Short-term rate" is equal to hourly fee charged at on-street system.
2. Evening rates established to attract/serve appropriate uses.
3. Long-term, daily/monthly rates balanced by Rule of 85%.
4. Rate manipulation triggered by Rule of 85%.
5. Rate manipulation generally at the long-term end to facilitate transition of long-term parkers to appropriate parking locations within the downtown.

- C. Establish a "Downtown Parking Fund" from revenues derived from downtown public parking.

As pricing is implemented in the downtown, it will be important to direct the funds into a specific account intended to support on-going transportation and access in the downtown. The Downtown Parking Fund should be restricted to:

1. Debt service.
2. Operations.
3. Enforcement.

4. Marketing and communications.
5. Transportation Demand Management programs.
6. New supply.

Wayfinding

A. Creation of a uniform system of directional signage.

The City should consider directional signage on the roadways that directs customers to specific facilities. This will be of greatest importance at primary portals into the downtown, at major traffic intersections within the downtown and at primary points of ingress at specific facilities.

B. Creation of a uniform system of signage for off-street facilities owned and/or operated by the City of Ashland.

1. The City should establish a consistent signage package that incorporates a uniform design, logo, and color package into all information signage related to parking.
2. Each off-street public facility should be named by its location (e.g., Lithia at Pioneer, B at Water Street).
3. City signage at off-street facilities should direct customers to the next available visitor lot (e.g., “Employee only parking facility, Visitor parking available at Lithia @ Pioneer Street”).

Marketing and Communications

A. Develop marketing and communication system

1. Maps. Develop maps that visually represent the parking zones (i.e., blue zone – Core - is customer parking, green zone is long-term parking) and identify the location of visitor versus employee facilities.
2. Validation program. Evaluate the feasibility of retail and theater validation systems if, and when, the City moves to pricing parking.
3. TDM alternatives. Incorporate alternative mode options (i.e., shuttles, transit, and bicycle) into parking communications materials.

Design

A. Adopt design guidelines for future structured facilities and lots.

1. Ground level “active uses.”
2. Location/orientation of pedestrian stairwells and elevator lobbies.
3. Landscaping, signage and lighting standards for surface facilities.

Enhanced Access

- A. Evaluate feasibility of a downtown circulator system to tie adjacent parking areas to core.
 - 1. Coordinate circulator to mutually serve employees and visitors.
 - 2. Possible funding tie to meters/parking fees.

Residential Mitigation

- A. Adopt and implement Residential Permit Parking Program (RPPP).
 - 1. Establish criteria and procedure for implementing an RPPP in anticipation of future spill over issues into residential areas, particularly Zone C.

4.5 ***Summary***

A comprehensive parking management plan based on the desire to provide on-going access to priority users will be facilitated through the actions suggested above. Coordinating and actively managing the available supply of parking will result in reasoned and appropriate implementation of parking management strategies based on the dynamics of parking use and the growth of the downtown. The actions presented in this memorandum will assure the City and its users that parking management strategies are implemented within a system that is fully maximized and operated at a high level of efficiency.

Section 5: Land Use and Streetscape Plan

5.1 *Land Use*

The downtown area of Ashland is zoned C-1 Retail Commercial District. The purpose of the district is “...to stabilize, improve and protect the characteristics of those areas providing commercial commodities and services.” The code lists a number of permitted, special permitted, and conditionally permitted uses.

An overlay district known as the “D” district (roughly located between Lithia Way and Hargadine Street) defines an area where off-street parking is generally not required, and buildings up to 55 feet tall (rather than 40 feet) are conditionally allowed. These two differences from the underlying C-1 zone are intended to encourage denser development in character with a traditional downtown.

Lithia Way was built as the north-bound leg of a couplet formed with Main Street. Because it is the newer of the two streets, Lithia Way has less of a traditional downtown appearance than Main Street. Lithia Way generally has lower building density, shorter structures, more asphalt, and less public space than Main Street. These characteristics make it a less attractive pedestrian environment, and so both businesses and available parking tend to be under-utilized compared to those located on Main. The City has long had the desire to connect Lithia Way more strongly into the downtown environment.

One recommendation to accomplish this would be to expand the “D” district to include the northern side of Lithia Way. The area between 2nd Street and Pioneer Street to mid-block, and between Pioneer Street and Water Street to “B” Street could encourage infill with denser development by reducing the need for developing large off-street parking areas and allowing taller buildings.

Other important considerations are discussed under Streetscapes. These include appropriate infill development and improving the walking environment on critical cross streets through downtown, such as Oak, Pioneer, 1st, and 2nd Streets.

5.2 *Streetscape Improvements*

Streetscape elements such as trees, lights, benches, planters, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, surface treatments, and infill development are urban design elements that make a downtown pedestrian friendly. These elements are particularly important in cities such as Ashland where the main street (in this case, a couplet) carries a high volume of through traffic. In such cases, streetscapes must be strong enough to balance the pedestrian environment against a heavy moving vehicular background. Figure 5-1 describes the overall downtown in terms of its existing and potential streetscape elements.

This discussion of the downtown Ashland streetscape is broken into eight components:

- East Main Street.
- Lithia Way.
- Streets perpendicular to East Main and Lithia (in particular Oak and Pioneer).
- Alleys: Will Dodge Way and Ender's Alley.
- Street Oriented Urban Open Spaces.
- Downtown Gateways.
- Public Restrooms.
- Infill Buildings.

The streetscapes in these areas are developed to differing degrees. Will Dodge Way and Ender's Alley contain almost no pedestrian amenities. Lithia, Oak and Pioneer exhibit some elements, but with inconsistent implementation. On the other hand, East Main Street has a high degree of streetscape element development and rhythm extending its entire length. Overall, a strong set of streetscape elements has been initiated and needs only be refined and applied throughout the downtown area.



Figure 5-1

5.2.1 *East Main Street*

East Main Street is the primary commercial street in downtown Ashland, and is the most developed, with a nearly continuous line of building facades on both sides of the street. Of particular distinction are the built-in raised planters. These planters not only provide greenery and sitting surfaces, but do much to separate the pedestrian environment from the heavy vehicle traffic on East Main.

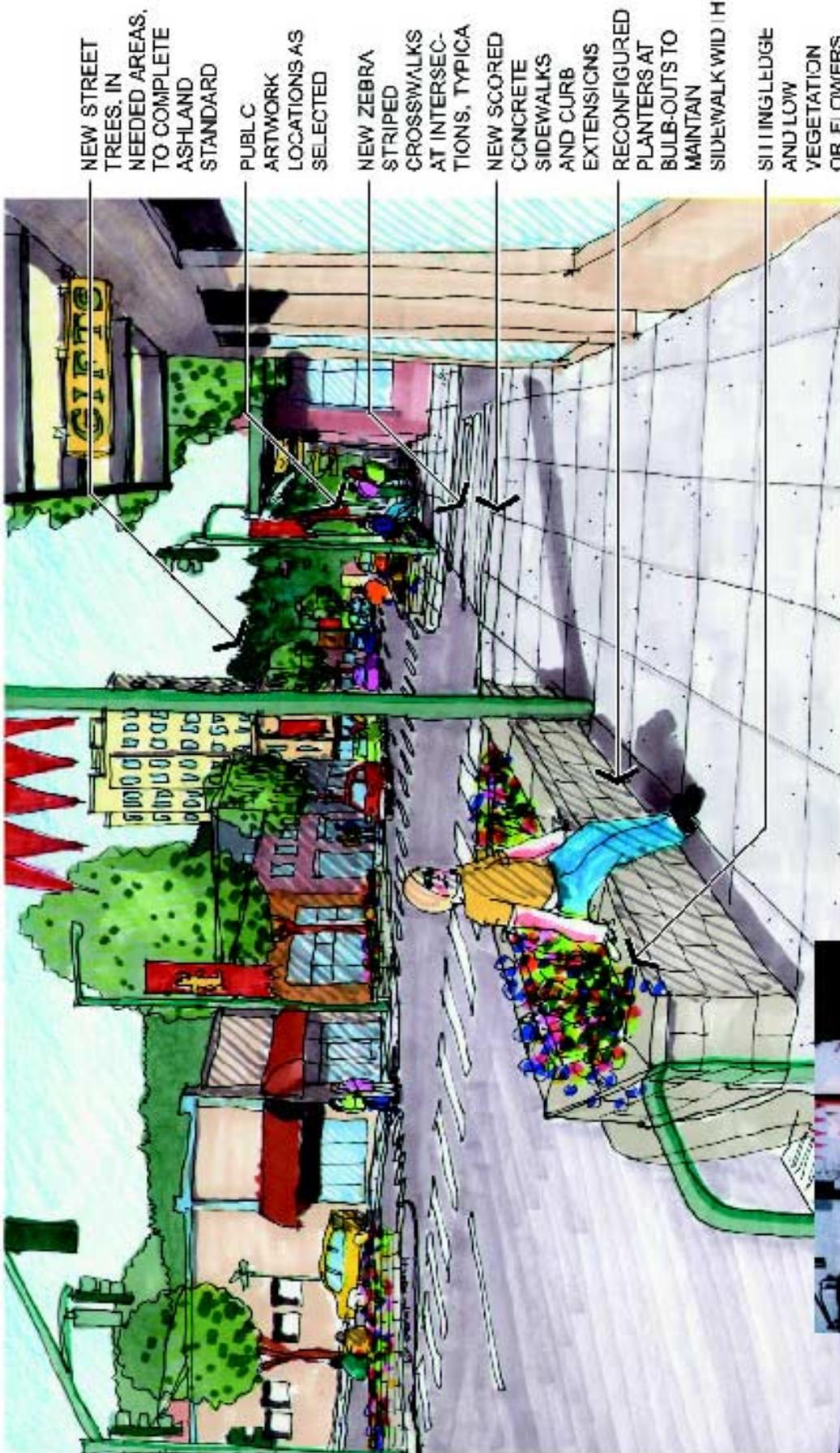
As described in Section 3, the pedestrian environment along East Main Street should be enhanced through the enlargement of existing curb extensions or the creation of new extensions where now absent. These extensions, along with zebra-striped crosswalks, will create more pedestrian emphasis in downtown Ashland. In addition, the placement of a new mid-block crossing between 1st and Pioneer will create a more even rhythm of pedestrian street crossings along the length of East Main Street.

Reconfiguring the existing planters to extend into new curb bulb-outs will add more space to the basic sidewalk width. The opportunities to build in new benches, newspaper boxes, and additional drinking fountains can also be realized in with planter reconfigurations. These reconsiderations should be looked at on a case-by-case basis in subsequent design phases. Continuing to replace the existing planter landscaping materials with low-growing shrubs or annual flowers will provide greater pedestrian, vehicle, and storefront visibility. New planters to match the existing vernacular should be added at proposed mid-block crossings.

Expanding or adding curb extensions and reconfiguring planters provides a number of opportunities for large scale public artwork in the downtown area. Reconfigured planters could incorporate local, hand-picked boulders into their construction as an accent. These boulders would echo the unique local geology, as does the “Ashland buff” color of concrete that is now used. One or two boulders per planter, with the rock incorporated within but spanning slightly beyond the planter walls would add drama, a natural element, and additional seating.

Other recommended streetscape improvements on East Main include tree grates for new and existing street trees, closely scored concrete at street corners, bicycle parking on each block and the clustering of newspaper boxes.

Figure 5-2 demonstrates added streetscape elements along East Main Street. Figures 5-3 and 5-4 illustrate proposed streetscape elements at intersections and mid-block crossings.



NEW STREET TREES, IN NEEDED AREAS, TO COMPLETE ASHLAND STANDARD

PUBLIC ARTWORK LOCATIONS AS SELECTED

NEW ZEBRA STRIPED CROSSWALKS AT INTERSECTIONS, TYPICAL

NEW SCORED CONCRETE SIDEWALKS AND CURB EXTENSIONS

RECONFIGURED PLANTERS AT BULB-OUTS TO MAINTAIN SIDEWALK WIDTH

SITTINGLEDGE AND LOW VEGETATION OR FLOWERS

ASHLAND DOWNTOWN PLAN PHASE

VIEW OF STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
AT E. MAIN ST. FACING NORTHWEST

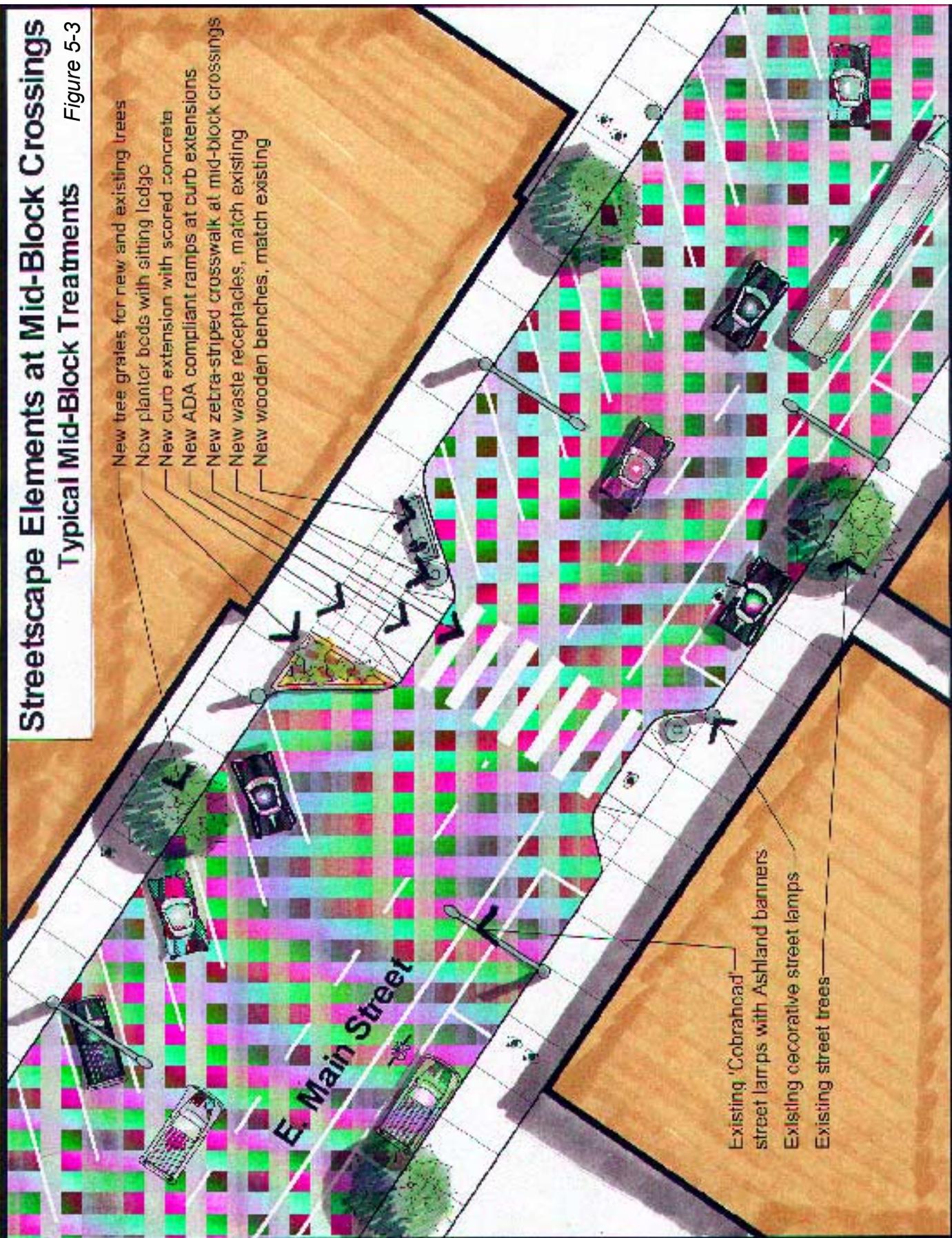
EXISTING (E) SEDER ARCHITECTS AND DAVID EVANS & ASSOCIATES

Figure 5-2

Streetscape Elements at Mid-Block Crossings

Figure 5-3
Typical Mid-Block Treatments

- New tree grates for new and existing trees
- New planter beds with gifting ledge
- New curb extension with scored concrete
- New ADA compliant ramps at curb extensions
- New zebra-striped crosswalk at mid-block crossings
- New waste receptacles, match existing
- New wooden benches, match existing



- Existing 'Cobrahead' street lamps with Ashland banners
- Existing decorative street lamps
- Existing street trees



5.2.2 *Lithia Way*

Lithia Way will benefit from many of the streetscape treatments proposed for East Main Street. Primary importance should be placed on the development of a consistent street tree pattern and concrete curb extensions as shown in Section 3.

Peculiar to Lithia Way are several very acute-angled intersections, a result of the convergence of differing street grids and the curve of Lithia. These areas represent an opportunity to create sitting areas by slightly extending the public right-of way. Furnished with benches and trash receptacles, these areas could provide attractive sitting areas similar to several existing on East Main near Lithia Park.

Because Lithia Way sidewalks are narrow, hanging flower baskets or planters installed on the sides of buildings are recommend instead of East Main Street-type sidewalk planters. Other amenities as previously discussed should be added as the level of building development along Lithia Way increases.

Figure 5-5 shows potential infill development and streetscape improvements at Lithia Way and Oak Street. Figure 5-6 illustrates typical intersection improvements on Lithia Way at Oak and Pioneer.

5.2.3 *Cross Streets: Oak, Pioneer, 1st, 2nd and 3rd*

The City's goal of connecting all areas of the downtown can be reached by improving the pedestrian environments on the cross streets between East Main St. and Lithia Way. Oak and Pioneer Streets in particular are priorities for further streetscape improvements due to their central role in providing the pedestrian connection between parking lots on or around Lithia Way and East Main St.

On Oak and Pioneer Streets, the addition of occasional local free-standing granite boulders set into the concrete sidewalks can provide an attractive sitting surface, tying into the Main Street planter recommendations and add a special local touch. .

5.2.4 *Will Dodge Way and Enders Alley*

The pedestrian fabric of downtown Ashland can be further strengthened by enhancing the existing alleyways as secondary pedestrian and bicycle connections. Resurfacing the alleys with rein-forced scored concrete will enhance the pedestrian environment while maintaining their existing use as working service alleys. As with Guanajuato Way, additional streetscape elements such as street lights, benches, bicycle parking and trash receptacles should be incorporated to enhance the feeling of pedestrian friendliness without compromising vehicular movement. These alleys can provide vital pedestrian connections between buildings as density of buildings in downtown in-creases.

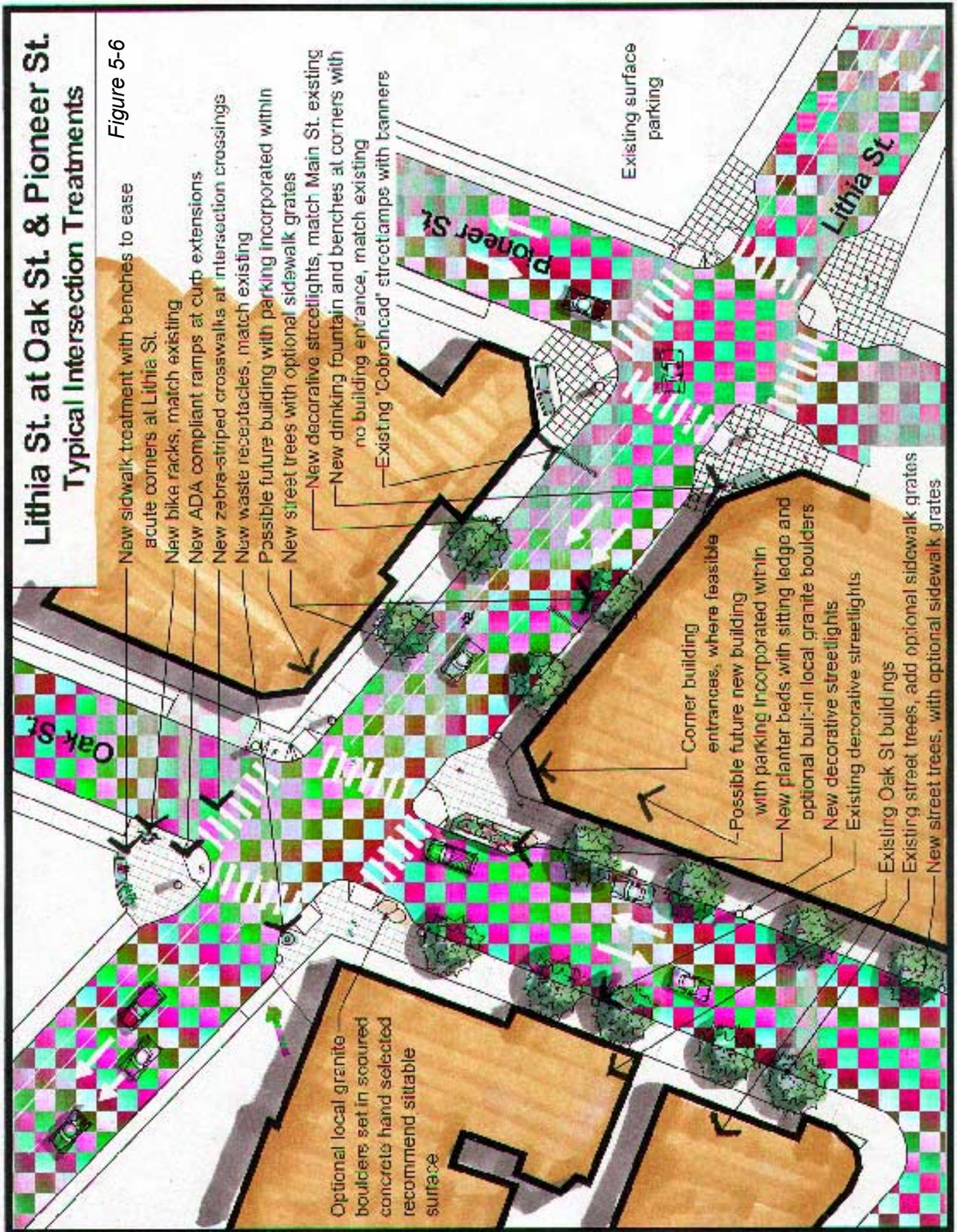
- PROPOSED NEW BUILDING INFILL WITH CORNER ENTRANCES, PARKING POTENTIALLY INCORPORATED WITHIN THE BUILDING
- NEW PLANTERS WITH SITTING LEDGES, MATCH EXISTING
- RECOMMEND LOCAL GRANITE BOULDERS WITH SITTABLE SURFACE
- NEW CURB EXTENSIONS WITH 24" SCORING
- ATTENANT ZEBRA-STRIPED CROSSWALKS
- NEW WOODEN BENCHES/ SITTING AREA, USED TO EASE ACUTE STREET CORNERS



EXISTING (A)

ASHLAND DOWNTOWN PLAN PHASE
 VIEW OF BUILDING INFILL AND STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
 AT LUTHLA WAY AND OAK ST. FACING SOUTHEAST
 SEDER ARCHITECTS AND DAVID EVANS & ASSOCIATES

Figure 5-5



5.2.5 *Street Oriented Urban Open Spaces*

Downtown Ashland is fortunate to have a key ingredient of a successful urban environment -- urban open spaces. Lithia Park is a tremendous asset with its unique natural environment and proximity to downtown. Other well-used open spaces include Lithia Plaza, the Shakespeare Plaza, the Black Swan Theater Plaza, and Bluebird Park. These spaces provide essential pedestrian-oriented spaces that contribute significantly to the human scale of downtown. A number of open space opportunities are illustrated in Figure 5-7.

Throughout the downtown, there are “left-over” and in-between areas that could potentially be enhanced as additional small urban open spaces to link the larger spaces. Similar in size and concept to the Black Swan Plaza, developing and furnishing these areas with benches, trash receptacles, water fountains, and shade would provide additional space and amenity for pedestrians. Newspaper boxes and public information display boards can further enhance the function of these spaces. As described below, several of these spaces also provide the potential for locating additional public restrooms.

The existing US Bank parking lot on East Main Street could be a good location for a small urban open space. This space could be acquired by either reducing the bank parking requirement, or other change in use.

Reconfiguration of the Will Dodge Way alley where it intersects Lithia Way leaves a small triangular land parcel that could be developed as a welcoming small space at the east end of downtown. Several spaces along Lithia Way are well located to provide small sidewalk-oriented open space, defined by recommended new infill building development. Between Pioneer and First Street, such a space can connect Lithia Way and additional development and parking to Will Dodge Way as a continuous pedestrian movement environment.

5.2.6 *Downtown Gateways*

At each end of the downtown Main/Lithia couplet, transportation and street alignment changes have been suggested in Section 3. Although the east end of the couplet and west end differ in street and intersection type, similar landscape or signage in these spaces can identify the entry to the urban downtown core of Ashland. Incorporation of planters and local granite rocks, with large signs or large public symbolic artwork can anchor each gateway space. Figure 5-8 illustrates how the gateway at North Main and Lithia Way could look with the proposed improvements.



ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT ON MAIN STREET
 •RECONFIGURE PLANTERS, RETAIN SITTING LEDGE
 •ADD STREET TREES TO COMPLETE EXISTING PATTERN
 •NEW MID-BLOCK CROSSING BETWEEN 1ST AND PIONEER STREETS

STRENGTHEN PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT ON LITHIA WAY
 •STREET TREES, WHERE NEEDED, TO MATCH MAIN ST. STANDARD
 •WOODEN BENCHES AND SITTING AREA TO EASE ACUTE CORNERS
 •CURB EXTENSIONS AND ADA COMPLIANT RAMPS
 •LOCAL GRANITE BOULDERS WITH SITTABLE SURFACE SET INTO CONCRETE

ESTABLISH PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS THROUGH POTENTIAL BUILDING INFILLS IN CORE AREA

STRENGTHEN PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT AT DODGE WAY
 •ADD STREET LAMPS
 •WHERE POSSIBLE, RESURFACE WITH REINFORCED SCORED CONCRETE
 •ENCOURAGE THRU-BUILDING CONNECTIONS IN EXISTING AND NEW STRUCTURES
 LANDMARK INFILL BUILDING LOCATION

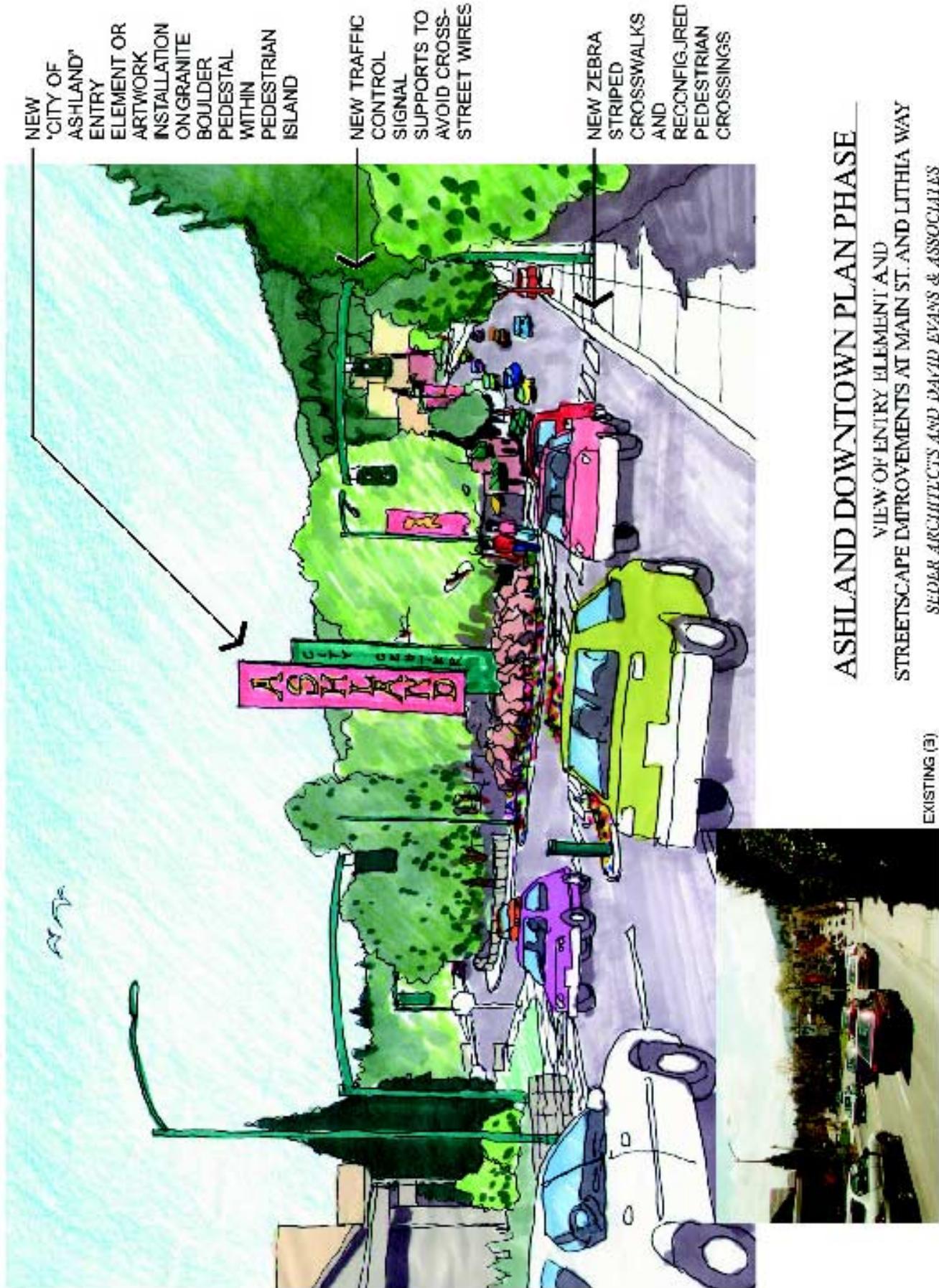
DEVELOP STRONG PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION ALONG OAK AND PIONEER STREETS
 •ADD STREET TREES
 •ADD WOODEN BENCHES
 •COMPLETE STREET LAMP PATTERN
 POTENTIAL INFILL BUILDING SITES, ENCOURAGE CORNERENTRIES AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, PARKING INCORPORATED WITHIN THE STRUCTURE

ASHLAND DOWNTOWN PLAN PHASE II

URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STREETSCAPES AND BUILDING INFILL OPPORTUNITIES

SEDER ARCHITECTS AND DAVID EVANS & ASSOCIATES

Figure 5-7



NEW
"CITY OF
ASHLAND"
ENTRY
ELEMENT OR
ARTWORK
INSTALLATION
ON GRANITE
BOULDER
PEDESTAL
WITHIN
PEDESTRIAN
ISLAND

NEW TRAFFIC
CONTROL
SIGNAL
SUPPORTS TO
AVOID CROSS-
STREET WIRES

NEW ZEBRA
STRIPED
CROSSWALKS
AND
RECONFIGURED
PEDESTRIAN
CROSSINGS

ASHLAND DOWNTOWN PLAN PHASE

VIEW OF ENTRY ELEMENT AND
STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS AT MAIN ST. AND LITHIA WAY
SEDER ARCHITECTS AND DAVID EVANS & ASSOCIATES

EXISTING (3)

Figure 5-8

5.2.7 *Public Restroom Facilities*

The location of additional public restrooms into downtown Ashland is of great concern to the public. Although public restrooms located near the crossing of Winburn Way and Ashland Creek are in the final stages of construction, they are felt to not be convenient enough for pedestrians in any other part of downtown except Lithia Park and Guanajuato Way. Public restroom facilities could be positioned in either new or existing buildings or in urban open spaces.

One potential public restroom site is located on the alley along the north side of the Ashland Springs Hotel. This site appears to not be large enough for fully accessible and properly screened facilities for both men and women. In addition, due to the slope and surrounding structures, development of any restroom facilities could be expensive. Unisex, single occupant facilities could possibly work in this area, however.

Public restrooms serving the Plaza area of downtown have several potential locations. One possibility in the future would be within a recommended infill building at the corner of Main, Water, and Lithia Way. Such facilities could be designed to be accessible only from the sidewalk, without compromising building security.

Another possible restroom location is at the base of the Shakespeare Stairs, which could serve the plaza area, Lithia Park, and theatergoers. At this location, the facility could be recessed into the slope below the Angus Bowmer Theatre.

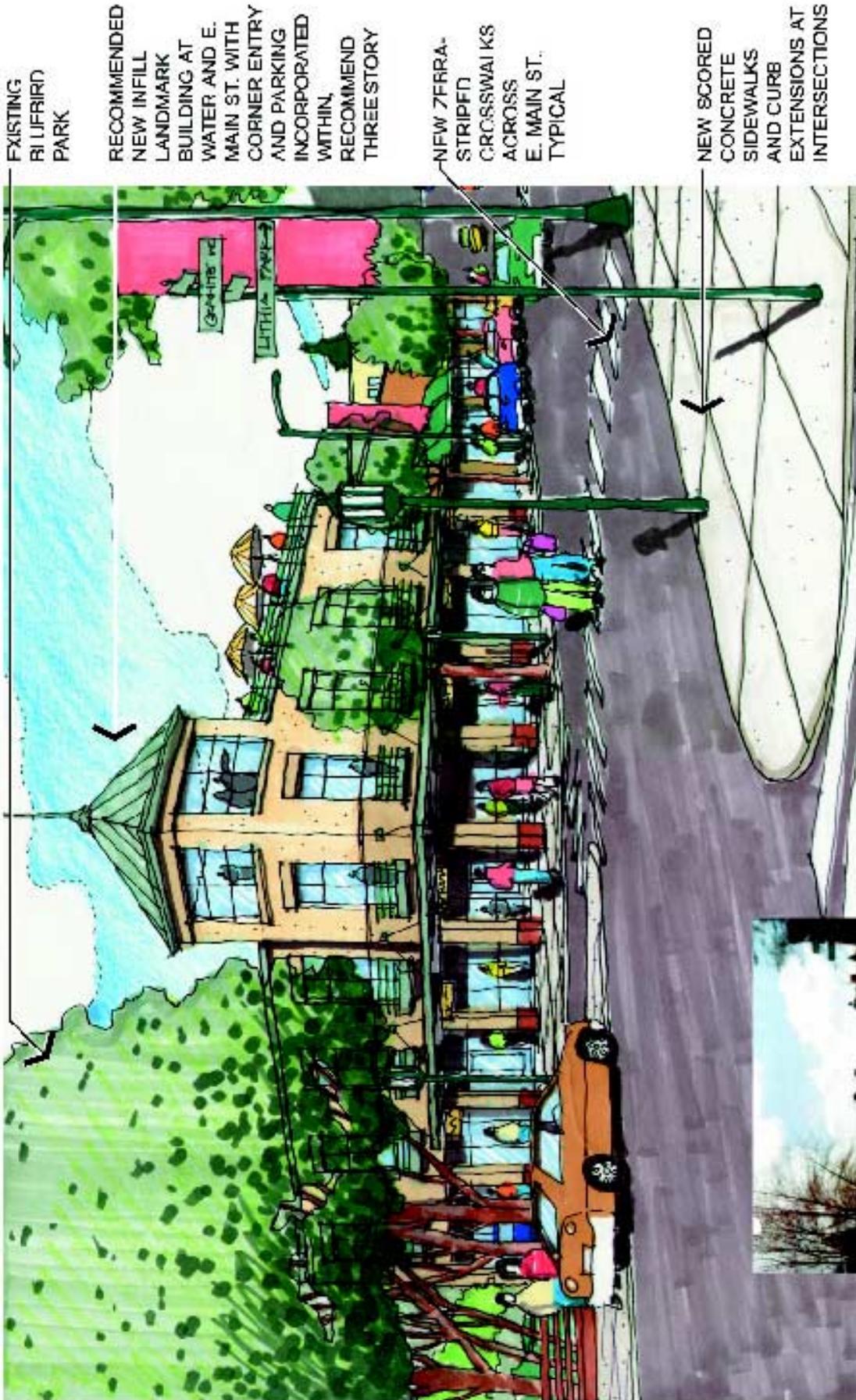
5.2.8 *Infill Buildings*

Building height, mass, and relative position are the primary definers of the sense of a downtown. Downtown Ashland as a whole has a strong sense of place, with a very pleasant and appropriate feel for the downtown of a city of 20,000. This sense of place is greatest on Main Street around the Plaza, and falls off considerably along Lithia Way. As existing businesses expand and new enterprises move into downtown Ashland, the opportunity to create new structures that not only respond to the owners' needs, but also can further the development of the urban character in downtown Ashland.

The City has expressed a goal to increase density along Lithia Way to become more in alignment with Main Street. A number of new infill building opportunities exist, as well as several opportunities to increase the development density on properties already occupied by structures. Figure 5-9 illustrates some infill concepts.

In general, new structures should be at least two stories, and higher in some cases. This level of density would not only take full advantage of limited downtown land but also strengthen the definition of the overall urban environment. View potentials are strong from some upper stories of infill buildings.

The slope of downtown Ashland can be used to great advantage in new infill buildings. The difference in grade between East Main and Lithia Way can yield two overlapping ground floor levels in a full block building, for example. This slope differential can also be used to screen parking, and even to facilitate non-visible rooftop parking. This becomes especially valuable at the small block between Oak, Pioneer, East Main, and Lithia, and the site at the



ASHLAND DOWNTOWN PLAN PHASE
 VIEW OF BUILDING INFILL AND STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
 AT E. MAIN ST. AND WATER ST. FACING EAST
 SEDER ARCHITECTS AND DAVID EVANS & ASSOCIATES

Figure 5-9

corner of Main, Water, and Lithia Way. Both of these small sites have the potential for two overlapping ground floor levels. New infill building projects should be carefully designed to take full advantage of sloping sites.

In general, street level floors of infill buildings should be commercial, with upper floors being either commercial, office, or residential. The City should also encourage the incorporation of use-able roof decks on all or part of new building roofs. These could not only enhance building value by taking advantage of Ashland's great views and pleasant climate, but also present a more pleasing view from buildings and even residences higher up the downtown slope. A destination rooftop restaurant in downtown Ashland could be a very positive feature of a new infill building. The corner of Main, Water, and Lithia Way would be particularly appropriate for an infill building.

Certain new multi-story buildings could incorporate parking within, behind, or even on top of the building. The sensitive incorporation of screened parking in new infill building projects where feasible could increase the close-in parking supply in downtown Ashland.

Corner entries are recommended for new downtown infill buildings. Such entries make buildings more accessible from both streets, adding to the pedestrian vitality at the corners. Where feasible, and at prime locations, public restrooms should be encouraged within new buildings. These facilities should be planned so that they are accessible from the sidewalk independent of the building in which they are located.

Large infill sites, such as the lot located south of Lithia Way between 1st and 2nd should be developed to their fullest extent. For this site, a two or three story building could be used as an anchor building or perhaps even a new performing arts center. This building should incorporate parking to replace the existing on-grade parking lot in this location.

Finally, as downtown building density increases, aligning entries and through-building pedestrian connections can increase activity in the downtown, especially where they can be aligned with developed alleys and rear sidewalks.

5.2.9 *Summary of Streetscape Recommendations*

- Complete established street tree pattern.
- Reconfigure the East Main Street planters, integrate local hand-picked granite boulders and replace existing planter material with low vegetation and flowers.
- Add local, free-standing granite boulders, as space permits, to provide sitting surfaces on Oak and Pioneer Streets, along with other streetscape amenities.
- Create new sitting areas with benches, trash receptacles, water fountains and bicycle parking at corners along Lithia Way.
- Add tree grates at new and existing street trees.
- Place benches, trash receptacles, and bike stands at regular intervals as part of a general increase in pedestrian amenities throughout the downtown, especially on Lithia Way.
- Identify and incorporate selected areas for public art.
- Develop small sidewalk oriented urban open spaces or “pocket parks” at several other spaced locations in downtown, similar in concept to the Black Swan Plaza.
- Cluster newspaper and magazine racks with other public information displays at small urban open spaces.
- Create new public restroom facilities in downtown locations.
- Create strong gateway treatments at both ends of the downtown couplet.

Section 6: Next Steps

Ashland has a strong history of implementing its plans, and earlier planning efforts for down-town Ashland have yielded good results. Ashland has retained and improved its reputation as one of Oregon's premier cities. The downtown is healthy and vibrant. This plan update addresses details that would strengthen the downtown's existing attributes.

This Phase II plan includes recommendations for many improvements to downtown. These range from planning changes to relatively simple physical improvements (such as restriping Lithia Way to include bike lanes), to complex and expensive construction projects (such as reconstructing Main Street to allow curb extensions to be built). The City will refine and prioritize these recommendations through the continued involvement of the public.

6.1 *Possible Evaluation Criteria*

The City of Ashland needs to consider these improvements and decide which ones are worth taking forward. The projects can be done in various combinations and variations, depending on priorities, funding, and other issues. The following criteria are often used by cities to prioritize improvements:

- Relevance to goals (low to high).
- Adequacy of existing facility (superior to poor).
- Cost estimate (high to low).
- Available funding (none to complete).
- Technical implementation (complex to simple).
- Political implementation (difficult to easy).
- Potential use (low to high).

There does not need to be any particular weighting of these criteria. For example, if the majority of the criteria are well above average, then the project is a good candidate for implementation. However, one extremely negative criteria can offset several positive ones.

6.2 *Assigning Priorities*

The following is one example of how the City might break down the proposed projects in order to prioritize them. This list is roughly summarized from the preceding text and is based on a combination of very approximate costs, construction difficulty, and logical sequence. There are a number of other ways to organize the projects; for example, by geographic area. The City will need to examine these projects closely to assign priority, and be prepared to revise priorities as conditions change.

6.2.1 Suggested Short Term/Low Cost/Early Sequence Improvements

- Rezone the north half block of Lithia Way to C1 “Downtown.”
- Restripe Lithia to include bike lanes.
- Restripe all existing crosswalks in downtown to zebra pattern.
- Replant planters with low-growing plants.
- Move mail boxes on Lithia Way.
- Prepare engineering drawings for Lithia Way curb extensions; put costs in CIP.
- Initiate discussions with ODOT about future ownership of couplet or initiate STA designation.
- Enhance existing parking inventory database to include turnover data.
- Review parking enforcement activities to assure that existing time zones are honored.
- Establish three “parking management zones” based on desired economic uses and user types: A (core), B (intermediate), and C (periphery).
- Develop “Guiding Principles” defining the priority purpose/use of each parking management zone and adopt them as a policy element of the parking code.

6.2.2 Suggested Mid-Term/Mid-Cost/Mid-Sequence Improvements

- Change out street furniture (light poles, trash receptacles etc.).
- Remove third lane on Main Street, close left turn from Plaza onto Oak Street, add bike lane, diagonal parking, truck loading areas.
- Prepare engineering drawings for reconstruction of East Main Street, adding curb extensions; put costs in CIP.
- Implement parking management strategies. Create additional parking areas as needed.

6.2.3 Long-Term/Higher Cost/Later Sequence Improvements

- Reconstruct Main Street and add curb extensions, revise planters.
- Revise Siskiyou/Main intersection as roundabout or signal.

Appendix A: Summary of Charrette Comments

◇ Intersections and Roadway

Southbound approach very important.
 People confused by sidewalk in median near Helman.
 Sea of cars because of signal at Helman.
 Pedestrian signal needed.
 Crashes not clustered.
 Lithia-2nd should prohibit right turn.
 Mail drop at 1st before crosswalk distracts drivers.
 ODOT budgeted for replacing signal boxes in 2 years.
 Third lane on Main Street used for truck delivery.
 Converting to 2-way streets not in scope of this work.
 Strengthen connections across couplet - parking, crosswalks, alleys, tie together destinations.
 Consider closing 1st or 2nd Street.
 Downtown needs shuttle.

◇ Streetscape

Banners effective.
 8 planters need adjustment.
 1988 planters too big, use hanging baskets instead.
 Need more consistency in design.
 Rest rooms needed.
 More covered bicycle parking needed.
 Trash cans ugly.
 Surface treatments inconsistent and deteriorated.
 Festival moving away from Elizabethan motif.
 Need more green in downtown.
 Utility lines obvious coming into downtown.
 Need alfresco dining.
 Plaza is parking lot, not pedestrian oriented.
 Main Street:
 + Excellent vistas.
 + Good scale.
 + North end anchored by Plaza, Park and Creek.
 + South end partially anchored by Library.
 + Good mix of businesses.
 + Street furniture.
 - Several weak lots.
 - Large planters.
 - Inconsistent lighting & signing.
 - Lack of public spaces and rest rooms.
 - Not enough green.

◇ Land Use

Need building where lot is at Water and Main.
Don't want exposed multi-level parking.
Buildings inconsistent - 4 stories to 1.
Downtown should include Library.
Daylight basement parking opportunities.
Plaza should be more pedestrian oriented.
Wells Fargo could have shops under parking because of slope.
Need year-round economy, not just 4 months.

◇ Process

150 business owners but only 2 attending.
Parking of more interest to general population than pedestrian needs.
Extension of 1988 plan - what worked and what didn't.

Appendix B: The Angle on Diagonal Parking

Angle (aka diagonal) parking is common in downtown areas where there is sufficient roadway width. Conventional wisdom is that angle parking has a higher crash rate than parallel parking and should be avoided.

In reality, the crash rate per space has been shown to be similar for parallel and angle parking. The difference is that angle parking contains more spaces in a given block. More parking movements from the added spaces is what causes the increase in crashes. (Refer to T. McCoy, et al., Safety Evaluation of Converting On-Street Parking from Parallel to Angle, Transportation Research Record 1327, National Research Council, 1991.)

Another complaint about angle parking is that it results in many rear-end collisions on busy streets because cars are backing out into traffic. Actually, the severity of crashes is similar to that of parallel parking on the same type of street.

Studies have not looked at the effect angle parking has on overall safety and the pedestrian environment—it is likely that angle parking improves conditions (see advantages below).

Perhaps the safest on-street parking is “reverse angle parking” where cars back into the spot. This works well where there is a very wide sidewalk or a planting strip so that pedestrians are separated from engine exhaust. Reverse angle parking would not be appropriate for downtown Ashland because of the relatively narrow sidewalks.

The advantages (+) and disadvantages (-) of angle parking are:

- + Up to twice the number of stalls in a given block.
- + Less off-street parking required which increases building flexibility and density.
- + Slows traffic (appropriate to the downtown).
- + Parking is easier and faster (partially offsetting the delay caused when backing out).
- + Permits deep curb extensions (the depth of the stall) which greatly shorten crossing distance and provide space for street furniture.
- + Both the driver and passengers exit outside of the travel lane.
- Takes road width that could be used for a wider sidewalk or another travel lane.
- Reduces width of sidewalk because of vehicle overhang.
- Harder to exit than parallel parking (limited visibility).
- May cause windshield glare onto sidewalks and into shops.
- Makes cyclists uncomfortable if they use the adjacent lane.
- Empty spaces are harder to detect which may cause stop-and-go driving.
- It would be a change from the existing conditions.

Given these many factors, angle parking needs to be installed with care. It would appear to be compatible with a low-speed, pedestrian-oriented downtown where there is sufficient

width (as on Main Street). Angle parking exists on a few side streets such as 1st Street and 3rd Street.

There are about 65 parallel parking stalls and 1 loading stall in this segment. Each stall takes up about 25 feet including buffers between pairs of stalls. This means a hundred feet accommodates about 4 stalls.

By eliminating one travel lane it would be possible to stripe angle parking stalls on the east side of Main Street between a point north of Pioneer Street to a point north of 2nd Street, a total of about 2 blocks. The number of angle parking stalls would depend on the geometry chosen (stall width, depth and angle). Typical measurements are 9 by 18 feet at 45 degrees which means each stall sticks out 15 feet from the curb and runs for 12.6 feet along the curb face. With this geometry up to 7 angle stalls can be installed in the curb space of 4 parallel stalls.

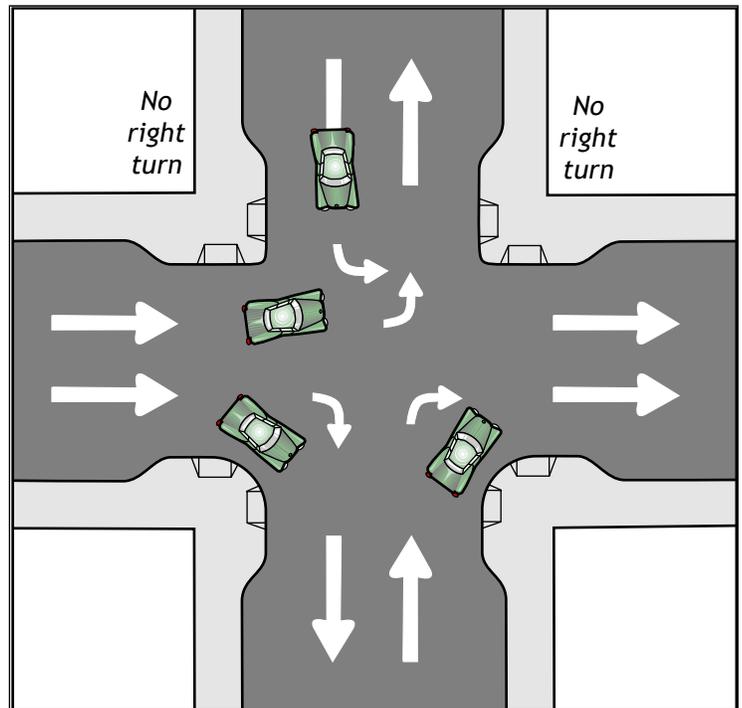
As proposed some of the curb would be taken up with a mid-block crossing and larger curb extensions, so the angle parking would add about 6 stalls.

Appendix C: A Short Course on Curb Extensions

Also known as “bulbs, bulb-outs, bump-outs, neckdowns, flares, or chokers,” curb extensions shorten pedestrian crossing distances, improve their visibility to motorists, and widen the sidewalk right where space is most needed for ramps, signal poles, street furniture, a waiting area.

Ashland already has many curb extensions on Main Street. Curb extensions are recommended at all intersections in downtown where on-street parking is allowed. Curb extension design is unique to each corner and should take advantage of the couplet by squaring the corners where right turns do not occur because of one-way traffic.

One-way traffic means no right turns at two corners which can be then be squared off. Square corners allow for better ramp design and easier pedestrian crossings.



A curb extension does not typically cause a loss in parking stalls, assuming that the existing stalls are properly located. Some of Ashland’s stalls are too close to intersections for adequate sight distance and maneuvering space and should be removed in any case.

To work the best, curb extensions are designed to make the crossing width as narrow as possible—at least as wide as the parking lane so that pedestrians are visible to motorists and not hidden behind cars. This means at least 8 feet for parking stalls parallel to the curb and 15 feet or more for angle parking. Some of Ashland’s existing curb extensions are relatively shallow and do not extend far enough into the roadway.

Curb extensions are not just for corners. Mid-block crosswalks also benefit from them, and curb extensions can take up any length of the block depending on how many parking stalls are wanted. They can be tailored for each block to give the best combination of sidewalk width and on-street parking. With angle parking the area gained can be large enough to plant substantial trees.

Reducing pedestrian crossing distance at signalized intersections improves signal timing if the pedestrian phase controls the signal. The usual speed used for calculating pedestrian crossing time is 4 ft (1.2 m) per second. The time saved is substantial when two corners can be treated with curb extensions.

Non-signalized intersections also benefit from curb extensions by increasing the visibility of pedestrians to motorists, as well as reducing the time pedestrians are in a crosswalk.

By themselves, curb extensions can be expected to lower vehicle speeds by around 0.5-1 mph. Larger reductions may occur when curb extensions are used with raised medians, textured crosswalks, and other traffic calming measures.

Curb extensions need to be carefully designed to drain properly, to avoid ice, leaf and road debris buildup, and to allow street sweepers to hug the curb. During the winter snow plowing season, it helps plow operators when curb extensions are marked with signs or other visible objects.

Ashland's many skewed intersections complicate vehicle turning movements, so that each curb extension must take into account the anticipated turns and the types of vehicles involved. At corners where large vehicles (trucks, buses, emergency vehicles, etc.) are expected to turn frequently, special care must be taken to design the curb extensions to accommodate this movement (note that standard turning templates tend to overestimate the space needed by large vehicles at low speed).

Because there are so many variables in curb extension design, the unit cost is difficult to estimate without a detailed inventory. Many of Ashland's corners have drain grates and poles located in the pedestrian path which may need to be moved or accommodated.

An even larger challenge is the roadway's extreme crown from many pavement overlays. It is impractical to construct curb extensions into the roadway until the pavement is ground down to a less severe sideslope. Even functional curb ramps may be difficult because of the dip at the curb.

Where it is impractical to construct curb extensions, some of the same benefits can be achieved by paint and bollards. (Note: Although bollards are found in some states and are common in Europe on highways, the Oregon Department of Transportation does not like to place bollards on its highways, so this treatment is probably best reserved for city streets.)

The high point down the center of Main Street (called a crown) not only causes parked vehicles to tip, it also makes street improvements such as curb extensions and ramps difficult.

